

T H E

H E R M I T.

V O L. I.



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A N O V E L.

By Miss MINIFIES.

The SECOND EDITION.

In TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.



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T H E
H E R M I T.



C H A P. I.



A B O U T forty miles from the Metropolis is a village, for beauty out-vying the many delightful ones with which this island abounds.—Verdant fields, enamelled with flowers, are here made still more charming by a serpentine river that meanders through them.—Upon the velvet margin of this clair mirror the lovely nymph may contem-

plate her dazzling complexion, without fear of having it injured by the scorching sun; Nature having planted its banks so thick with elms, limes, and willows, that though *Phæbus*, in his journey, now and then gives them a glance, yet his rays are so mild that the most celebrated belle would not have run from them.

THIS walk was to our rural lads and lassies what the *Mall* or *Green-park* are to those of a more exalted sphere.

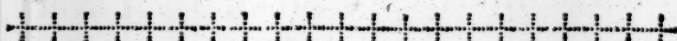
HERE every new gown or cap was shewn for the first time.—It was here *Amintor* got the blushing *Sylvia* to declare she preferred him to *Cimon*;—for, as the damsel rightly observed, What are great riches without the man one loves? and, to prove these were her real sentiments, she determined
never

never more to see the opulent *Cimon*, who was then in actual possession of a mill and two acres of ground.—It was here too, in this very walk, that *Roger* swore he would be constant to his dear *Susan* ; who, in return, protested she had sooner three of Sir *Francis Gilford's* best cows should die, than that *Tom* the footman should again touch her hand.

AFTER such an assurance, could he have any doubt of his *Susan's* faith, she being dairy-maid to the Baronet, and, it was thought, loved her *keey* better than any other earthly thing, except honest *Roger*.

SIR *Francis Gilford* being at this time the *Goliath*, or, in other words, head man in the village, it will be necessary to give my reader a sketch of

the family at the *Grange*, that being the name of the seat in which the *Gilfords* had resided for a century past.



C H A P. II.

SIR *Gregory*, father of the present incumbent, was, in every sense of the word, an honest man ; that is, a good husband,—a tender parent,—a sincere friend,—a kind landlord.

THESE were his characteristics. His income, though large, was scarce sufficient for his unbounded generosity. The worthy and friendless were always sure of a welcome at his table. The indigent, that continually crouded his gates, went not away unsatisfied. Never was sorrow so contagious as at
the

the little parish of *Weatly*, when death took from them their patron and benefactor.

LADY *Gilford* wanted her husband's nobleness of soul ; but nothing of this deficiency appeared whilst he lived. Her actions might be said to shine through his ; nor was her heart unlike those flowers which expand their foliage to the sun, but no sooner is its congenial influence withdrawn, than it again sinks into its native littleness ; so was her mind for a time enlarged by the example of her husband, but having lost that, became narrow and contracted.

AFTER the interment of Sir *Gregory*, Hospitality, which in the life-time of that good man always stood as Porter, was immediately discharged, and his place supplied by Parsimony. As the

former by smiles and affability invited all to enter; so the meagre and sour visage of the latter kept them out as effectually as bolts and bars.

It was by means of this new servant that the present heir possesses an estate clearing six thousand *per annum*, which at his father's death hardly amounted to five; yet he could not properly be said to gain by this acquisition, as it was procured him at the expence of the most profound ignorance in all that is learned or polite.

In the place of *Homer*, *Horace*, and *Virgil*, he substituted such authors as could best inform him in the rise and fall of stock, or instruct him in the true value of land; in which he made so swift a progress, that after an exact calculation he found it was still possible to
raise

raise his estates five hundred annually : this he determined to do by turning out those old tenants of his father's who would not come into his terms.

THE joyful mother's eyes sparkled with pleasure to see the happy bent of her son's disposition ; she felt no fears on his account, having moulded his heart according to her own sordid principles : it had often passed the ordeal trial, by being exposed to the most distressed objects ; but, always to the great satisfaction of Lady *Gilferd*, was hardened by the sight.

THOUGH mild-eyed Pity was banished by a wrong-judging parent from the breast of Sir *Françis*, it was not unmindful of the warm reception it had formerly met with in that of his father ; for which reason, unwilling to

leave a family where he had been once so distinguished, he shook his dove-like pinions, and flew for shelter to the bosom of *Lavinia*; which finding to be also a habitation for the Virtues and the Graces, determined from that instant to make it his abode. To speak without a metaphor, never were dispositions more diametrically opposite than this brother and sister.

OFTEN with inexpressible concern had this amiable girl seen and shed tears at the instances of unfeeling inhumanity that peeped out in all his actions, yet she never disputed with him. She would say to herself, "If dead to the pleading of compassion, will any thing that I can urge affect him?" striving by her own benevolence to prevent, as much as she could do, the cruelty he meditated.

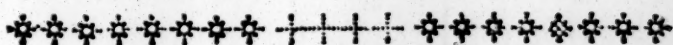
YET

YET in this she was obliged to follow closely the rule prescribed us in the Scriptures, Not to let our left hand know what our right hand doeth ; for had any of these acts of generosity, which constituted the sole delight of *Lavinia*, come to the ears of Lady *Gilford*, she would have been sure to have fallen under her Ladyship's severe displeasure. Indeed, she had never been a favourite of her mother, whose whole stock of fondness was lavished on Sir *Francis* ; nor is this partiality to be wondered at, there being in their sentiments so strict a unity.

AT the commencement of this History, Miss *Gilford* had gained her twentieth year, the first seventeen of which had fled away with a pleasing rapidity : but it was not so with the last three ; they had dragged heavily on

as if upon their wing they bore the troubles which had rent her tender heart; yet to make her some requital, they brought to *Weatly*, about six months before this period, Mr. *Conventry* and his daughter, in whose conversation *Lavinia* found such pleasure, that in those hours spent at *Hartly-row* she almost forgot to think herself unhappy.

As my readers are unacquainted with this little family, I must step back to their first arrival, or rather to a sketch of their history before that time; but thinking it is a poor compliment to introduce people of their merit at the end of a chapter, I shall dedicate another to that purpose.



C H A P. III.

IT being a received opinion, that the Feminine gives precedency to the Masculine, we shall for that reason beg Miss *Coventry*'s pardon a few minutes to bring the reader acquainted with her worthy father.

MR. *Coventry* was a man both of family and fortune, had received a liberal education, extremely sensible, with a thorough knowledge of men and manners.—He made what is called the Grand Tour, but did not return so heavy laden as many of our *British* youth, being curious to cull none but flowers: as for weeds, he was of opinion we had already too many of our own growth.

BEFORE the age of twenty five he had visited most of the courts in *Europe*, at none of which he passed unnoticed. A certain great Potentate, of whom he was a particular favourite, would have detained him at ——— ; but that not suiting with his plan, he declined the Monarch's intended favour, tho' with such modesty and gratitude, that his Majesty honoured him with letters to the *French* Court, wherein he was mentioned in such high terms as occasioned a contest who should distinguish himself most, by shewing civilities to the favourite of so great a prince.

THE death of his father hastened his return to *England*, where he soon after married Miss *Villers*, a young lady of great merit but small fortune, to whom his affections had been long engaged;

engaged ; yet as the alliance was not agreeable to his father, Mr. *Coventry* determined to sacrifice his Love to his Duty ; nor would his honour suffer him even to hint a desire to the lady, of keeping her heart reserved till he might be at liberty to offer her his own in exchange.

NEVER had he openly declared his passion ; and dreading to see that hand bestowed on another which would have made him happy, he resolved for some years to leave *England*.

EVERY thing being settled for his departure, he went to pay a last visit to Miss *Villers*, whom he acquainted with his design. — A tear, which could not be suppressed, escaped her ; yet by words she did not attempt to detain him. — They parted. — He set out the next day
on

on his travels, whilst she retired to the consolatory arms of an indulgent aunt who lived at *Weatly*, both secretly in love with each other, and both determined never to marry, if Fate should deny them the object of their wishes.

THEIR constancy was not put to a long trial ; Death thought fit to call on the elder Mr. *Coventry* two years after his son left *England* ; on which event he returned ; and no obstacle now remaining to his union with Miss *Villers*, they interchanged their mutual vows at the altar.

THE ceremony being performed at *Weatly*, in compliance with the intreaties of their aunt *Preston*, they still continued her visitors. The situation of this sweet place had something in it so very pleasing, the happiness they there
en-

enjoyed was so exquisite, that they scarce ever thought of returning into what is called the Great World.

AMBITION often courts those to whom he is most obnoxious; at least it was now the case with Mr. *Coventry*. Lord *L—*, a man in great power, and his cousin-german, well knew how very fit this relation was to support the character for which he had destined him.

AN ambassador was to be sent to the court of —, when his Lordship proposed Mr. *Coventry*, who was accordingly nominated.

As men are apt to judge of others sentiments by their own, Lord *L—* thought such an honour could not avoid giving his cousin the highest plea-

pleasure ; for which reason a messenger was dispatched to acquaint him with it ; at the same time desiring his immediate attendance. Mr. *Coventry* and his Lady received this mandate in a far different manner than was expected by their noble kinsman ; their hearts were so intirely filled with Love, that Ambition could not find so much as a corner to inhabit.

HOWEVER, he determined to accept the embassy ; but without a view either to honour or profit.—It was the pleasure of his Monarch that he should go, and this alone at once resolved him ; on which he wrote a polite letter to Lord *L——*, thanking that nobleman, and signifying his design of coming to town the next week.

MRS.

MRS. *Coventry* determining to accompany her husband, they took a tender leave of Mrs. *Preston*, and set out for the Metropolis.—His credentials were soon ready; they embarked, and after a short delightful voyage arrived safe at ——. Formerly he had resided some months at this court, and was again received with particular marks of esteem.

MRS. *Coventry* met with universal admiration; nor is it to be wondered at, as she surpassed almost every woman in external as well as internal beauties.

THIS confessed superiority did not excite the least spirit of envy; emulation was the only passion she inspired in the breasts of those fair dames.

BALLS, Concerts, Masquerades had flown away with twelve months, when Mr. *Coventry* received orders to return immediately into *England*, but not till he had declared war with ——— : such a command as this he had but little reason to expect, as our court and that of ——— were at this time seemingly on the most amicable terms.

HAVING no design to dive into the political causes for this war, or why Mr. *Coventry* had not been made sooner acquainted with them, I shall only say he did as he was directed by his late order.

AFTER taking a polite leave, he embarked with his Lady, though her going was entirely against the advice of the learned, as she was very near the time of her delivery.

EVEN

EVEN Mr. *Coventry* used every persuasion to make her continue at — till she was delivered—No arguments could prevail, and they embarked together.

IT is a common and just observation, That love will sometimes make a coward of the bravest.

MR. *Coventry* had never till now known what it was to fear—Winds had blown from every point : he had, as the Royal Psalmist elegantly describes it, “ seen the sea mount to the heavens, and return with equal impetuosity to the nethermost deep,” yet his mind continued unmoved :—but now the time was come when his soul seemed ruffled by every breath of air.—If the weather was fair, he dreaded
a calm :

a calm :—again, if it blew fresh, a storm would certainly ensue.—Whole hours would he even deprive himself of his Lady's company to walk on the deck, contemplating the hemisphere : ten times in an hour would he ask the sailors if the winds continued favourable.

Mrs. *Coventry*, on her part, shewed much more heroism.

SHE saw her husband's anxiety, and knew it was on her account ; she therefore exerted her resolution, which nothing else could have made her exert ; for a natural dread of the water, joined to an extreme sickness, made her suffer a great deal : however, at length they were both relieved by being safely landed at *Dover*.

HAVING

HAVING once more seen them set foot on *terra firma*, we think it high time to put an end to the chapter.



C H A P. IV.

A Few hours after they disembarked they proceeded to *London*, a house in *Great Ormond-Street* being provided for their reception.

THE next morning Mr. *Coventry* waited on his Majesty, by whom he was most graciously received ; and staying only a short time at St. *James's*, paid a visit to Lord *L——*. It was by his Lordship he was made acquainted with the reasons for his sudden recall to *England* ; but as that gentleman desired them to be kept a profound secret,

cret, I do not think myself at liberty to disclose of what nature they were.

WE must now leave him with his Lordship, and return to Mrs. *Coventry*, who, though far from well when her husband left her, yet had made no complaint; but now found it would be soon necessary to send for Mrs. *D—*; and in a few hours a message was dispatched to Mr. *Coventry* to acquaint him his Lady was safely delivered of a daughter.

CAN my reader form any idea of the joy a poor wretch receives, who having but ten pounds ventures his little all in the lottery; if it turns out a blank he starves, and when his hopes are at the lowest ebb up comes the ten thousand :—or suppose the transports

ports of a man who receives a reprieve just as the dreaded musquets are levelled at his head ;—if he can raise to himself any picture of such sensations, then may he in some measure judge of Mr. *Coventry's*.

HE handsomely rewarded the person who brought him the intelligence ; and flinging himself into his chariot, ordered to be drove home with great expedition.

THE way from *Hanover-Square* to *Ormond-Street* not being a great length, and the horses appearing to have caught some of their master's impatience, he soon saw the welcome door.

THE servant who opened it did not wear a face of joy : the house-keeper, who

who met him in the vestibule, had melancholy visibly painted on her's; however, it passed unnoticed by Mr. *Coventry*. People happy in themselves are not the first to mark the appearance of misfortunes in others.

WHEN he eagerly enquired after his Lady, and was informed Doctor *Edgcome* would wait on him, without receiving any other answer he began to be alarmed.

“ DOCTOR *Edgcome* ! (repeated he)
“ For heaven's sake, Mrs. *Dayly*, what
“ can all this mean ! Cannot you an-
“ swer me ? Is your Lady——”

HE was proceeding ; but happening to glance his eye towards her's, “ O
“ my God ! (he exclaimed) why those
“ tears ? But speak ! speak ! your silence
“ is,

“is, if possible, more dreadful than
“ my own thoughts !”

STILL Mrs. *Dayly* was silent, replying only with her tears : at length she pronounced with difficulty, “ My
“ Lady ! my Lady, Sir !” and again her voice was choaked.

THIS was enough : he suddenly dropped upon his knees, he lifted his streaming eyes to heaven, and cried out, “ Spare, oh gracious God ! if
“ it be thy blessed will”——the life of my dear wife, he would have said, but sobs prevented more.

THE Chaplain, who now entered, judged by his posture and tears, which still flowed, that already he was acquainted with what he so much dreaded to inform him ; therefore taking him by the hand as soon as he arose, “ Now

“ is the time (said he) my dear Mr.
“ *Coventry*, to shew both the Christian
“ and the Hero.”

“ THEN she is gone! gone for ever!
“ (exclaimed he) but tell me, my
“ friend,—nor fear my resignation to
“ the divine will.”

“ A HEART like yours (replied that
“ gentleman) will always think and
“ act as it ought—We should not set
“ our minds too much on any thing
“ here below.—Mrs. *Coventry*, whilst
“ on earth, lived the life of an Angel;
“ do not then repine that she has now
“ for ever joined those Blessed Spirits.
“ This is a trial sent you from the
“ Almighty;—bear it you must;—
“ therefore, since it is unavoidable, bear
“ it like a Man;—one who hopes to
“ meet her again where you will never
“ more be disunited.”

THIS

THIS being a favourite topic with the good man, he would probably have carried it much farther, if the sudden fall of Mr. *Coventry* had not interrupted him.

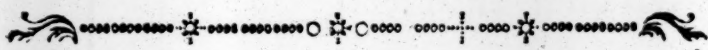
HIS fortitude was not equal to his resignation ; for no sooner did he hear she was really dead, than his eyesight forsook him, and he fell senseless on the floor.

DOCTOR *Edgcome* was much alarmed ; he rang the bell, and the servants soon came to his assistance. Mr. *Coventry* was immediately conveyed to bed, where his recovery was for a long time doubtful.

HOWEVER, the apprehensions of his friend were at length removed, but a physician, who was called in,

still thought him in great danger from the fever into which this shock had thrown him.

WHOEVER are solicitous for the recovery of this worthy unfortunate gentleman, may receive the gratification of their wishes in the following chapter.



CHAP. V.

READERS,—if any of you are of the same way of thinking with the Wise Man, who says “it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of mirth ;” if any such there are amongst you, I not only permit, but also invite you to stay some little

little time longer in *Ormond-Street*, where you shall behold real sorrow ; not such as Lady R—— expressed for the loss of her Lord ; nor does it bear the least similitude to *Jack Hampton's*, when, by the death of his elder brother, he came to the title and estate.

MR. *Coventry's* tears flowed not through the channel either of fashion, custom, or hypocrisy ; they came directly from a heart where the image of his deceased wife afforded them a continual source ; yet Time, that kind healer of woes, with the presence of the little *Maria*, in some degree stopped their current, and calmed, if not suppressed his afflictions.

MARIA was, at least in his opinion, the exact resemblance of her dear mother. Often would he sit and gaze

whole hours on the miniature, and contemplate her growing charms, which every day received improvement from the hand of Time, that seemed resolved to ripen so fair a blossom, and bring it to perfection, that the root from which it sprung might not sink into oblivion.

MR. *Coventry* saw the beauties of his daughter ; he saw them with satisfaction, with delight, but not without reflection. He rightly judged that an edifice, though ever so richly decorated by the artist's hand, soon comes to decay ; his chief care, therefore, was to fit up the apartments of her soul, not only as they were more durable, but more worthy of his care.

THE cardinal Virtues he placed nearest her heart : Affability, Generosity,

fity, and Humanity, with a thousand other nameless ones, were ranged by him in such beautiful order, that I can only say, in one word, in mind and person *Maria* was the master-piece of Nature.

SHE had now attained her fifteenth year, in which time her father's fondness had never suffered her to be from him; yet he took care not to let her feel this partiality to her disadvantage.

MASTERS of all kinds had been procured to teach her the polite languages, whilst a governess was provided to instruct her in those accomplishments young ladies of fashion are expected to possess.

MR. *Coventry*, though much against his inclinations, stayed in town till

Maria was sixteen, when he proposed once more to visit the dear spot where he had passed so many hours of felicity with his beloved wife.

ONLY one disagreeable circumstance could attend his removing to *Weatly*. He knew his daughter's duty would not oppose any plan of life he approved ; but was he sure her heart would cheerfully acquiesce to leave the *beau-monde*, and that general admiration she was sure to inspire, wherever she appeared ? This reflection gave him uneasiness ; and nothing but an inclination for retirement, which he could not conquer, would have made him propose it to her.

How agreeably was he surprised to hear his sweet *Maria* declare, on his first hinting it, that nothing could possibly
make

make her more happy than such a retirement as he described !

“ WE shall there, my dear Sir,
“ (said she) find people who will tell
“ us their true sentiments without
“ flattery : sincerity and friendship are
“ surely confined to those charming
“ rural retreats.”

MR. *Coventry* did not think exactly with his daughter, yet made no discouraging reply, unwilling to deaden the rapture with which she embraced his proposal : however, he knew too much of mankind to suppose the Virtues had taken up their residence in any particular spot, knowing they were dispersed abroad ; and that whoever are willing to entertain them, whether in a public circle or a private shade, whether in a court or cottage,

may always find them ready for admittance.

ABOUT six weeks after this resolution, Mr. and Miss *Coventry* took a genteel leave of their general acquaintance, and an affectionate one of Lord *L—*, who was really a worthy man, and had shewn himself their sincere friend on all occasions.

ACCOMPANIED by doctor *Edgcome*, they left *London*, and without any accident or adventure worth relating arrived safe at *Weatly*.

HAD Mr. *Coventry* consulted only his own inclinations, he would have declined any acquaintance with the families who had also made that their place of residence ; not out of any dislike to them, but a thorough dislike
lish

lish of company : yet, for *Maria's* sake, he encouraged those advances that were made, and seldom a day passed without their receiving visits.

MISS *Coventry's* charms were echoed from all mouths, and in enumerating them they had not forgot to mention her fortune.

FIFTY thousand pounds, and such a lovely girl, could not fail to turn the heads of all the young fellows of fashion in or about *Weatly*.—Her appearance at church, the *Sunday* after their arrival, gained her the hearts of the whole village, from the lofty baronet down to the spruce attorney.—Those who had either mother or sister, intreated they would by some means or other make an acquaintance at *Hartly-Row*.

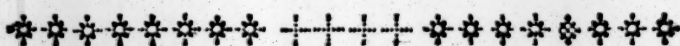
THE heart of Sir *Francis Gilford*, which was imagined till now to be made intirely of flint, was, to the surprise of all, but to none more than his mother, found to have in it something of a combustible nature; for it was most certain his consumed with the multitude.

HER Ladyship and her amiable daughter felt great pleasure at this unlooked-for event, though from very different motives.—His sister, who well knew the effects of that passion, hoped its influence would humanize his soul, and soften his bear-like temper: yet if it had not this desired power, she sincerely wished he might not succeed, as it was impossible for a man of his disposition to make happy one so mild and gentle as Miss *Coventry* was reported to be.

LADY

LADY *Gilford* considered nothing but the fortune she would bring into her family, which answering her most sanguine expectations, she congratulated Sir *Francis* on his choice ; and a card was instantly dispatched to inform Mr. and Miss *Coventry*, that, if agreeable, they would wait on them the next afternoon.

A POLITE and satisfactory answer being received to this little billet, I shall leave them to consult on the important article of dress, and close the chapter.



C H A P. VI.

SIR *Francis*, though mighty plain in his common appearance, would, on this extraordinary occasion, have dressed himself to the best advantage : but, alas ! in what a dilemma do we find him ? without so much as a trimmed coat or bag-wig to appear in before his mistress.

At length it occurred to him that he had never visited his late father's wardrobe, which might possibly afford him some relief in this moment of exigency. He flew to his mother, demanded the keys, and hastened thither with more impatience than I can well describe.

HAVING

HAVING rummaged over and over every drawer, every box, every trunk, being distracted in his choice amidst more finery than he expected to meet with, at length he laid his hands on a rich suit that seemed, as they lay in folds, to please him mightily; and pulling them out from under a heap of other things, equipped himself on the spot, and then went down to have his mother's opinion of his choice.

7

LADY *Gilford*, when she saw him enter her room, cried out, surveying him from top to toe, "This must do, "my dear, this must do, or Miss Co-
"ventry will not think as I did: the
"first time Sir *Gregory* came to visit
"me in these very cloaths, I thought
"him the most graceful figure I had
"ever beheld. There is magic in
"these cloaths.—Ah *Frank*! there
"will

“ will be no withstanding you. Miss
“ *Coventry* will soon put you in pos-
“ session of her thousands.”

THE vain fellow smiled a look of
assent, and fixing his long unmeaning
eyes on an opposite glass, replied,
“ Indeed, Madam, I must confess
“ your son makes no despicable figure.
“ —I think I am tolerable.—I think
“ I am not an object to be refused ;—
“ I think I am not—Yet damn these
“ women, my Lady ; there is no an-
“ swering for their capricious humours.”

“ BUT, my dear, (added her Lady-
“ ship) your father had a very pretty
“ sword, wig, and stockings, which,
“ poor man, he always used to wear
“ with this suit ; I fancy you may find
“ them, and then your dress will be
“ complete.”

AWAY

AWAY went Sir *Francis* in pursuit of these valuable acquisitions ; and having been successful in his search, when the coach drew up to the door which was to convey them to Mr. *Coventry's*, he offered his hand to help in the ladies, one of whom could hardly refrain from an immoderate fit of laughter, this being *Lavinia's* first interview with her wise brother, since he became a beau of the last age.

THAT my Readers may not accuse Miss *Gilford* of laughing at her own folly, I must in justice exhibit the very striking figure of Sir *Francis*.

HIS person was tall, corpulent, and bony ; his face long, pitted with the small-pox, without sentiment, and never ornamented with a smile but to answer some sinister purpose ; and on
this

this occasion it was so very conspicuous, that it may more properly be termed a convulsion than a smile. The only tolerable thing about him had been his hair, which three months before his tender mother obliged him to cut off, thinking, perhaps, his head heavy enough without it: now a round bob supplied its place, and must have paid *Miss Coventry* a visit with its master, had it not, for that day, been very fortunately superseded by a magnificent wig of his father's, whose three tails dangled on his broad shoulders. A full-dressed suit of dark green grogram, richly trimmed with a broad gold lace, fitted him very nicely after it was on; though we must confess, nothing but the most violent passion for *Maria* could have supported him in the arduous trial, whilst he worked, fumed, and tugged to get entrance

trance into the sleeves, &c. His legs would have been wonderfully handsome, if Nature had not, in fixing them to his body, made a strange mistake, and put that part to his knee, which must have been designed to join with his foot. Sir *Francis* had not himself perceived this mistake, and thinking them as worthy of notice as either his head or body, had ornamented them with a pair of crimson stockings, richly wrought at the ancles, and gartered very exactly.

WITHOUT exaggeration, such was the figure of Sir *Francis*: may not then the inclination for mirth, which his sister betrayed, be esteemed a natural and very excusable emotion ?

THE young baronet, on his return from *Hartly-Row*, found himself as
much

much in love as it was possible for one of his disposition to be, but without being acquainted with any of the refinements of that passion.

LADY *Gilford* expressed her approbation of Miss *Coventry* in high terms ; but neither her Ladyship nor her hopeful son were capable of distinguishing that young Lady's value : her lovely person, but more her princely fortune attracted their notice.

LAVINIA declared Miss *Coventry* to be the most desirable, beautiful, and accomplished woman she had ever seen. " Indeed, brother, (said she) you must be extremely happy, if this Lady should approve your addresses."

" IF ! (repeated he in a supercilious tone) *if* ! Pray, what reason can
" there

“there be to doubt it? Think you,
“child, Mr. *Coventry* will be such a
“fool to refuse a man of my figure?
“a man of six thousand a year?—a
“man of title?”

“MR. *Coventry*! (cried *Lavinia*,
“smiling) I imagined it was his
“daughter’s heart you wanted to se-
“licit.”

“WHY, should she give it me vo-
“luntary, which I think she cannot
“avoid, to confess the truth, *Levy*, I
“should not like my bargain the
“worse for having it thrown into the
“purchase.”

“I FANCY, Sir, you will find your-
“self mistaken, if you intend to pur-
“chase either Miss *Coventry*’s person
“or heart.”

“BE

“BE that as it may, I am easy about
“ the matter : however, I shall have
“ one trial with her father. My re-
“ liance is on him : he knows, I war-
“ rant, how many shillings make a
“ pound.”

“FIE, fie, brother !” said the love-
ly girl, a blush of resentment unit-
ing the rose to the lily ; “If these
“ are your real sentiments, do not re-
“ peat them. This afternoon, (con-
“ tinued she) I wished you might mar-
“ ry Miss *Coventry*. That wish, I
“ own, was from a selfish motive : I
“ was ambitious of being related to
“ such a woman :—I longed to call
“ her sister.—After what you have
“ said, you cannot be deserving so
“ great a treasure.”

“AND fie on you, *Lavinia* !” cried
Lady *Gilford*, drawing up her stiff
neck

neck, whilst Sir *Francis's* odious face was puffed out with passion ; “ Fie on
“ you, child ! Sure you have not con-
“ sidered on what you was so bold, so
“ daring, to say. Certainly your bro-
“ ther is deserving of Miss *Coventry*.—
“ Deserving, indeed ! Has he not an
“ estate adequate to her fortune ? Has
“ he not a title ? and a title, girl, is
“ not so lightly to be esteemed.”

“ OH ! you are mistaken, Madam,
“ (said the malicious snarler, biting
“ his blubber lip with vexation)
“ you are mistaken ; title is a mere
“ bawble in her better judgment, or
“ she would not have refused my
“ friend : she would not have carried
“ herself with such haughty airs to
“ Sir *William More*, and have taken
“ up with a fellow every way his
“ inferior.”

* OH

“ OH brother, brother ! (replied the
“ weeping *Lavinia*) how meanly,
“ how cruelly, do you remind me of
“ that unhappiness you assisted to
“ bring upon me ! Do you not blush
“ to call that vile man your friend ?—
“ He superior ! Sir *William More* su-
“ perior ! ——— If you have the least
“ regard to sacred truth, instantly re-
“ call your words, unless you meant to
“ say in every kind of wickedness. If
“ that was your meaning, I own, in-
“ deed, you are right : greatly in that,
“ is Mr. *Gore* inferior to Sir *Wil-*
“ *liam* !

“ ROMANTIC girl ! (foaming with
“ anger) You would, no doubt, run
“ after this good-for-nothing wretch,
“ did you but know where to find him.
“ No, no, girl, fool as I think him,
“ he is too wise for your arts, by G— :
“ he

“ he will not be troubled with you.
“ But don’t cry, *Levy*, (seeing he had
“ brought tears to her eyes) don’t cry,
“ my pretty forward Miss; Sir *Wil-*
“ *liam* will be here soon, and depend
“ on it, you shall not go without a
“ husband.”

“ *SIR Francis*, (replied she, spirited
“ up by this last insult) how dare you
“ use me thus?—What right have
“ you to dispose of me?—I tell you,
“ Sir, once again, that all the powers
“ on earth shall never force me to be
“ the wife of a man I hate, despise,
“ and loath.”

COMPANY coming in at this instant,
prevented the enraged *Sir Francis* from
making the answer he had, no doubt,
meditated, and also a severe reprimand
from *Lady Gilford*, who was

ready to storm at hearing her darling treated so freely by his ungracious sister.

BEFORE the visitors were seated, *Lavinia* took an opportunity to leave the room, in order to wipe away those tears her brother's ill usage had occasioned, and to give a sigh to the memory of Mr. *Gore* ; which being dispatched, she again returned to the drawing-room with a countenance that bore no bad resemblance to an *April* morning. Like that blooming month, her face was dressed with opening blossoms : the snow-drop hung upon her cheek ; her eyes were tinged with the violets blue ; whilst her breath exceeded the sweetness of that flower.

THE company, who all rose at her entrance, being again replaced, pursued

fued their conversation, which her appearance had interrupted.

MR. and Miss *Coventry* were their topics. The latter, it seems, was passing a severe scrutiny; and the two Miss *Jones's* had, as they flattered themselves, discovered many defects in her really faultless person. The eldest with particular energy pointed them out to Sir *Francis*, whom she had long thought a conquest worth obtaining.

“ I CANNOT for my life (said she)
“ see those thousand beauties in the
“ eyes of Miss *Coventry*, which my
“ cousin *Jack* is continually talking of.
“ Only observe them when you see her
“ next, Sir *Francis* : they are cut so
“ very long!—— Well, I protest their
D 2 “ shape

“shape do not please me ; nor is black
“by any means my favourite colour.”

“INDEED, sister, (added Miss *Patty*)
“there is a sweetness in them which I
“cannot help thinking agreeable ; yet
“I confess it is very wonderful that a
“young Lady reported to have so great
“a share of sense should paint, tho’
“it is laid on very cleverly.”

“ODIOUS ! (cried Miss *Jones*) Well,
“that is a fashion I never could accommodate myself to.—Pray, Sir
“*Francis*, is not her hair two shades
“lighter than the true chesnut ? For
“my part, I have only as yet had a
“transient view of this all-excelling
“beauty.”

THE Baronet being thus called upon, said, for his part (yawning as he spoke) he was no judge of womens' matters : he thought her very well altogether ; but rot him if he could tell whether her hair was dark or light.

MR. *Knowles* and Mr. *Nesbit* readily acquiesced with the sentiments of Miss *Jones*, though in their souls each heartily disavowed them ; but they were too polite and too well bred to contradict the Ladies.

MR. *Hunter*, a gentleman not quite so well bred as the very polite Mr. *Knowles* and Mr. *Nesbit*, having listened patiently, said with a deal of humour, " You are right, Miss *Patty* ; " Miss *Coventry* is most certainly " painted."

By Nature alone she is painted and drest,
Roses will bloom when there's peace in the
breast."

This he sung with such an air of reproach as made them both blush, particularly the person to whom he addressed his satire.

"Now (continued he) will any
body allow themselves to think Miss
Coventry does not carry peace in her
breast?—How can she avoid being
pleased and happy, when she gains
a new admirer in every man that
beholds her?"

THOUGH, after this reproof, their envy did not again appear, yet it was not dead, but only sunk back to hearts in which it had been long nourished.

MISS

MISS *Jones's* being less perfect mistress of any other subject than that Mr. *Hunter* had interrupted, spoke little the remainder of their visit, which ended at seven.

IF any of my readers, after that hour, in the month of *June*, and the finest evening in that month, are inclined for a solitary walk, I invite them to attend *Lavinia*, who having tied on a straw hat lined with blue, and thrown a handkerchief of the same colour on her neck, is proceeding all alone to that pleasing walk I described in my first chapter ; her brother still too much irritated to escort her : rancour and resentment were weeds which could not fail to flourish in a soil so uncultivated ; whilst her bosom, forgiving as Mercy, only sighed at his unkindness.

As *Lavinia* pursued her walk, she thought incessantly of Mr. Gore, and in this manner meditated on her wrongs :

“ ALAS ! (said she) the most worthy
“ of men believes me fickle, incon-
“ stant ;—he shuns,—he flies me ;—
“ he regards me as the enemy of his
“ repose. — Ah ! how could they de-
“ ceive a heart like his !—Vile, vile Sir
“ *William* !—Thy *Machiavelian* arts
“ have for ever robbed me of him.—
“ Every step I take reminds me of my
“ loss. — How applicable to me are
“ these beautiful lines I have so often
“ read, so often admired, in a sweetly-
“ distressing monody :”

“ In vain I look around
“ O’er all the well-known ground,
“ My lover’s wonted footsteps to descry !
“ Here oft we us’d to walk,
“ Here oft in tender talk
“ We saw the summer sun go down the sky.”

LAVINIA could not suppress her tears at the recollection of past scenes.

“IT is the opinion of a celebrated
“poet, That there is a pleasure in
“madness which none but mad-men
“know; so it is mine also, that there
“is certainly a pleasure in the enjoy-
“ment of melancholy ideas, which
“none can be a judge of, except those
“to whom they have been familiar.”

THOUGH Miss *Gilford*, at this instant, had not a thought but what was inspired by the goddess *Melpomene*, yet she would not have exchanged them to have seen the inimitable *Garrick*, or to have heard the warblings of a *Pinto*.

THE melody of the latter was well supplied by an harmonious *Philomel*,

perched on a tree under which *Lavinia* had placed herself.

THOSE who understand the nature of love will also know, that passion is generally attended with some degree of poetic rapture. *Lavinia* listened a few moments with fixed attention to the musical notes of her little feathered companion, and then exclaimed in the words of her most admired poet :

“ With such variety and dainty skill

“ Yon nightingale divides her mournful song,

“ As if ten thousand of them through one bill

“ Did sing in parts the story of her wrong.”

HERE her contemplations were agreeably interrupted by the appearance of Mr. *Coventry* and his fair daughter, who, invited by the serenity of the evening, were come to this enchanting walk to enjoy it in full perfection.

LA-

LAVINIA and *Maria*, who at first sight had been equally prejudiced in favour of each other, did not try to hide under the formal mask of ceremony their mutual pleasure at this unexpected meeting.

LAVINIA had high, perhaps romantic notions of friendship. The first time she saw and conversed with Miss *Coventry*, she thought herself convinced, she should in that young Lady find the phoenix so many had in vain searched for, a sincere and tender friend.

FAR, very far am I from thinking such a treasure is never to be attained; neither do I hold it so easy an acquisition as many unexperienced creatures of both sex believe it.

WHEN Lord *W*—— or Sir *Harry* —— shakes a thousand voters by the hand, swearing to each he is their eternal friend, he prostitutes the name.— Friendship is a sacred fire. To preserve its flame bright and lasting, it is necessary to light it up in hearts free from envy, ambition, or any of these extinguishers, as were our first parents before they had tasted the forbidden fruit, or as the bosoms of *Maria* and *Lavinia*.

TIME was so agreeably winged with a very pleasing and rational conversation, that they did not observe the approach of Vesper till she had actually wrapped them in her dark mantle.— *Lavinia* was so much importuned both by Mr. and Miss *Coventry* to spend the remainder of this evening (which her company had made so delightful)

lightful) at *Hartly-Row*, that she at last consented ; and as soon as they reached it, a servant was dispatched to prevent Lady *Gilford* from being uneasy at the absence of her daughter.

SIR *Francis* was with her Ladyship when the message came from *Lavinia*, and in spite of himself could not help being pleased at the thoughts of her cultivating an intimacy with Mr. *Conventry's* family, into which he hoped to be very soon received.—Nature having endowed him with a sufficient degree of cunning to etner it on the footing he wished, he found it would be absolutely necessary to wear a disguise till marriage should enable him to throw it off with safety.

BEING determined to follow his own ingenious devices, he very wisely
re-

resolved a thorough alteration should be his first step ; not an alteration of heart, but only of manner, regarding his behaviour to *Lavinia*.

“ I AM sorry, my Lady, (said he)
“ that I have taken off the cloaths I
“ wore this afternoon ; but they were
“ so plaguey tight, I could not fit in
“ them with any ease to myself. If I
“ had not been in such cursed haste, I
“ might have gone to escort *Levy*
“ home from *Hartly-Row* ; it would
“ have been a d——d good opportunity.”

“ AND why, my dear (replied her
“ Ladyship) will you not go as you are ?
“ You know Miss *Coventry* has seen
“ you full-dressed. I dare say she does
“ not forget the figure you made yesterday afternoon.—Ay, ay, I often
“ saw

“ saw her eyes fixed on you, *Frank*.
“ Come, come, go, my dear ; I per-
“ ceive your mind is set on it.—She
“ must some time or other see you in
“ *dishabille*. What signifies if it be
“ this night or a month hence ?”

THUS encouraged, he surveyed himself from shoe to wig, turned the latter three or four times on his clumsy fist, called a servant, bade him throw a little powder over it, and bring him his gold-headed cane, determining at all events to gratify his inclinations.

ABOUT ten o'clock *Lavinia* was greatly surpris'd to see him make his appearance at *Hartly-Row*. That lowr which used to sit on his brow was intirely banished ; and good-nature, though he had only usurped it for a time, wrought such an alteration, that
he

he paid his respects to Mr. and Miss Coventry with a grace that astonished his sister.

“SIR *Francis*, (said that gentleman, shaking him very heartily by the hand) as this visit is unexpected, we set on it the higher value: but let me add, Sir, though I gain one pleasure I lose another, as before you came I proposed being Miss *Gilford*’s escort to the *Grange*.”

“I WISH, Sir, (replied Sir *Francis*, who was by this time quite a second *Cymon*) you had kept your intentions a secret: my sister, I fear, will scarcely pardon me for robbing her of so agreeable a conductor; and, upon my honour, nothing would make me more unhappy than to offend her.”

LAVINIA,

LAVINIA, after what had passed that day, and indeed for many years, doubted with great reason the truth of this assertion ; yet she returned him a gracious smile, and the highest good-humour subsisted till twelve.

NOTWITHSTANDING the ridiculous appearance Sir *Francis* made the preceding day, when his dress pronounced him a stupid fool and conceited coxcomb, yet divested of these ensigns of folly, he was so very fortunate as to work a favourable change in the opinion of Mr. *Coventry*, who began to regard him as not altogether incapable of rational conversation, and to think the absurdity of his cloaths rather owing to the narrowness of education than to want of understanding.

INDEED,

INDEED, he had never shone half so bright as this evening. Luckily no subject had been brought on the carpet which required any degree of learning to support, and he had the cunning to adapt so intirely his sentiments to those of the company, that he appeared to all but *Lavinia* liberal, compassionate, humane ; in short, to be as full of those virtues as he was in reality of their opposites ; and he carried on this deceit so long, till he had actually imposed it on his sister.

OFTEN would he beg her pardon for being the means of preventing her from marrying Mr. *Gore* ; and one day he went so far as to assure her, if that gentleman should ever more return, he would no longer influence his mother to oppose their union. “ To
“ shew you, *Levy*, that I am sincere
“ (con-

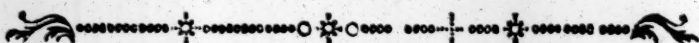
“(continued he), I am determined to
“ break with Sir *William More*. You
“ know he expects, on his return from
“ *London*, that Lady *Gilford* and I
“ shall push the match ; but he will
“ now find a cold friend in me.—
“ In return, may I not expect, *Levy*,
“ you will be my advocate with Miss
“ *Coventry*?”

“ I do promise, brother, to say every
“ thing in your favour that can be said
“ with justice.”

THIS answer had like to have destroyed his new plan ; yet he so well commanded his passion as not to suffer it to pass his lips, to prevent which he bit them most unmercifully.

RECOLLECTING himself for a moment, he replied, “ You are very
“ oblig-

“obliging, *Levy*.” then saying he was engaged to spend the afternoon with Mr. *Knowles*, he quitted the room, as I shall for some time my pen.



C H A P. VIII.

FOUR months had passed since Mr. *Coventry* came to settle at *Weatly*, in which time nothing material happened to our history, except an overture from Sir *Francis* on account of his fair daughter : to which Mr. *Coventry* had replied, that he did him honour ; but having determined in so nice a point not to influence the choice of *Maria*, it must intirely depend on her inclinations either to accept or refuse his offer.

AFTER

AFTER this answer, Sir *Francis* several times resolved to apply himself to the Lady ; but notwithstanding the good opinion he had of his own person and deserts, whenever he had an opportunity of speaking to her, the reserve of her manners and the dignity of her appearance awed him into silence.

THOUGH Miss *Coventry* could not condescend to any degree of freedom with the brother, to the sister she was without reserve, and every day served to increase their friendship.

Mrs *Coventry* had already told *Lavinia* every thought of her heart. Indeed angels might have known them, they were so pure, so like their own. Miss *Gilford* had not been quite so explicit ; not that hers were less innocent,

cent, or needed to be concealed from any other motive than the regard she was now beginning to feel for her brother, whose change of conduct, we must confess, was carried on with inimitable management, since he first laid down his scheme of operations.

ONE day Miss *Coventry* going to the *Grange* to call on *Lavinia*, she was told by a servant his young Lady was gone to walk on the terrace. Not suffering her to be sent for, she tripped through the lawn, where she perceived Sir *Francis* and his sister in deep discourse. They did not see her till she came so near as to hear her own name pronounced by the former ; and the surprise they both shewed at her appearance, confirmed the suspicion she began to entertain that she had been
the

the subject of some debate between them.

LONG had she dreaded an explanation of Sir *Francis's* passion ; for tho' she gave him many good qualities which in reality he had no pretension to, yet she disliked him with an inconceivable aversion.

LAVINIA had often hinted how happy she should be to call her sister, which she would not have done without believing his disposition intirely altered.

MARIA, who never felt the least tendency to love, either for him or indeed any other person, would on these occasions rally her friend ; saying, she estimated liberty so highly, that it was
not

not in the power of an emperor to prevail on her to resign it.

WHEN she surprised them on the terrace, proposing to take *Lavinia* an airing, as they had appointed the day before, it happened that Miss *Gilford* had just then promised her brother to seize the next opportunity of a private moment with her friend to mention his passion, which he swore he never should have courage to do himself.

SIR *Francis* having handed the Ladies to their chariot with the grimace of politeness, (for with real politeness he was intirely unacquainted) gave his sister's hand a gentle squeeze to remind her of her promise; and intending to see Miss *Coventry* either at the *Grange* or *Hartly-Row* after her return, he was going to prepare his sweet person
for

for the interview ; not in the antique cloaths of his father, but a modern suit of pompadour and silver just imported from *London*, with a wig, sword, hat, &c. of the newest mode.

BEFORE he begun to dress, the arrival of Sir *William More* disconcerted his intentions ; and notwithstanding all he had promised his sister, he gave the baronet a reception very far from cold or discouraging : and as the company of his friend would prevent him from a visit that evening to his mistress, he determined to console himself by a free enjoyment of his bottle ; a liberty he had for some time retrenched, with his other ill qualities.

WE shall leave this brace of worthies at a table with excellent claret before them, and go back to the Ladies.

LAVINIA had not forgot her engagement to Sir *Francis*, but found Miss *Coventry* so very determined not to receive his addresses, that she resolved never more to mention so unpleasing a subject

THOUGH Miss *Gilford* in reality did not look the least grave, yet the regard *Maria* had for her made that young Lady fancy she saw a cloud on her countenance ; and taking her hand with the most engaging frankness, “ Do
“ not, my dear Miss *Gilford*, (said she)
“ make me unhappy in withdrawing
“ your friendship. If I refuse your
“ brother, it is from the same motive
“ I should do the addresses of all the
“ men I have ever yet seen. Perhaps
“ my sentiments of love may be too
“ refined. How many do we every
“ day see marry with indifference, yet
“ live

“ live what the world calls tolerably
“ happy !—Possibly they may ; but I
“ will never make the trial : I have no
“ idea of what is meant by tolerable
“ happiness.—Do you think, *Lavinia*,
“ my notions of that state are too high,
“ when I tell you that to me it appears
“ a faint resemblance of what we are
“ to expect in another world, either
“ extreme felicity, or unceasing tor-
“ ment ?”

“ THESE sentiments (replied Miss
“ *Gilford*) I expected from you. My
“ brother must resign himself to his
“ fate ; such a heart as yours he never
“ can merit ; yet I will love you as a
“ sister, though you refuse to give me a
“ title to the name.”

NOTHING could be more agreeable
than this declaration to the person for

whom it was intended.—She returned the most sincere professions of esteem, and they continued their little excursion, delighted in the company of each other.

“ My dear, (said *Lavinia*, as they
“ pursued the great road) about two
“ miles from this place is one of Na-
“ ture’s rude beauties ; but so sweetly
“ pleasing, that if you are inclined for
“ contemplation, I will convey you to
“ it, and you shall confess no spot was
“ ever better calculated to inspire either
“ the most gloomy or the most cheer-
“ ful ideas.”

“ You have raised my curiosity to
“ so high a pitch (said Miss *Coventry*),
“ that positively you must give me a
“ description of this wonderful place
“ before we reach it.”

“ Not

"NOT a word of description," replied *Lavinia* ; and, pulling the string, ordered the coachman to drive immediately to *Combe-Woods*.

AGAIN Miss *Coventry* renewed her intreaties, but to no purpose ; *Lavinia* continued obstinately silent to all her inquiries.—Striking out of the beaten road, and entering one almost impassible, they continued dragging through narrow lanes ; till, all of a sudden, at the end of one of them, the carriage stopped, a servant opened the door, and Miss *Gilford* stepping out desired her friend to follow.

"FOLLOW (said Miss *Coventry*) !
"Where the deuce, my dear, would
"you lead (at the same time getting
"out) ? If you mean to shew me
"any remarkable view, I am sure we

“ must climb one of these high elms
“ to command it.”

“ TRUST yourself to my conduct
“ (replied *Lavinia*), and you shall nei-
“ ther climb or creep to attain the
“ promised land.” Then taking hold
of her arm, she turned short upon
the right ; and all at once startled *Ma-*
ria by introducing her to a small but
beautiful common, surrounded by na-
tural woods, and above them hills of a
thousand variegated colours, on the
sides of which she pointed out both the
Grange and *Hartly-Row*, with many
other pretty looking houses.

OBSERVING how much *Maria* was
delighted with this little spot, she said
to her, “ Here it is, Miss *Covenry*,
“ if you would indulge chearful ideas,
“ you may do it freely. If you are
“ more

“ more inclined to the gloomy, I
 “ will lead you to another retreat.”

“ I AM so pleased, so transported,
 “ (returned *Maria*) with this sweet en-
 “ chanting place, that I should be loth
 “ to leave it, if I had not a strong in-
 “ clination to have my whole curiosity
 “ satisfied ; so lead on, I beseech you,
 “ to the gloomy : not that I have any
 “ thoughts to indulge there, I’ll assure
 “ you.”

LAVINIA sighed.—“ This place
 “ (said she) is called *Combe-Woods*, and
 “ thought so very curious, that it is of-
 “ ten visited by strangers ; otherwise
 “ it would be perfectly unfrequented,
 “ none of the neighbourhood ever
 “ coming hither ; the common peo-
 “ ple having entertained a strange no-
 “ tion, that it is the habitation of su-

“pernatural beings ; and those of superior rank, having satisfied their curiosity, seldom take the trouble of coming again.”

By this time they were entered the surrounding woods.

“AH ! (said Miss *Coventry*) this, indeed, may be called a fit place for melancholy reflections. Here, (continued she, seating herself on an old tree felled by the hand of Time) let us on this friendly trunk enjoy them. But having none of my own, *Lavinia*, I charge you let me partake of yours.—Yes, my dear, it is in vain to deny it ; you have secrets ; painful ones too, or I am mistaken. I have heard you sigh often.—Certainly you do not sigh without a cause.”

“HEIGH-

“ HEIGH-ho !”

“ THERE it is again.—Declare immediately the happy swain who—”

SHE was proceeding, when Miss *Gilford* interrupted her : “ Cannot you inspire me with some small share of your charming vivacity ?”—

“ NOT a tittle (she returned), till you lighten that heart of yours, by giving me the huge secret it carries. —Do this, and I will engage to make you as blithe as a lark.”

“ WHAT you promise is not in your power to perform (said *Lavinia*) ; I can never more be chearful ! I can never again be happy !”

“ HEAVENS ! How you surprise, how you terrify me ! If you had troubles, why did you not make me

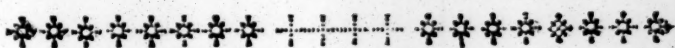
“ a sharer in them ?—Indeed it was
“ unkind !—Indeed I should not have
“ treated you with so little confidence !”

“ PARDON me, *Maria*, I had rea-
“ son till now for concealment. My
“ brother must have suffered in your
“ opinion : his hopes are now at an
“ end, and you shall no longer tax
“ me with reserve.”

“ THANK you, my dear *Lavinia* ;
“ we have yet an hour good before
“ we need leave this charming place.
“ You have alarmed my fears for you ;
“ in pity, then, make haste to relieve
“ them. If you are unhappy, it is the
“ office of friendship to take a share
“ in your concern.”

Miss *Gilford* saw the impatience of
Maria, and addressed her as may be
found in the next chapter.

CHAP.



C H A P. IX.

“ ABOUT two years since I was
 “ A unfortunate enough to be ap-
 “ proved of by Sir *William More* ; a
 “ man——”

“ NAY, my dear, (interrupted Miss
 “ *Coventry*) spare yourself the trouble
 “ of giving me his character : I have
 “ already received it from my father.
 “ Surely your friends could not en-
 “ courage a wretch of such abandoned
 “ morals !”

“ I KNOW not what to say in their
 “ vindication (replied *Lavinia*) ; riches
 “ often fascinate the senses, making
 E 6 “ people

“ people and things appear quite dif-
“ ferent from what they really are.
“ Light faults in persons of narrow
“ fortune are aggravated to a surprising
“ magnitude ; whilst an opulent man
“ may be guilty of the greatest enor-
“ mities, and pass them on the partial
“ world for lively fallies, frolicks, and
“ many other much too gentle appel-
“ lations. A king can do no wrong,
“ is a saying I have often heard ; nor,
“ in some peoples’ opinion, can men
“ on whom Fortune has bestowed her
“ favours. This I found to be the
“ case in respect to Sir *William More*.
“ When I objected to his love of drink,
“ All men that were not milk-sops
“ would sometimes take a chearful
“ glass :”—his libertine principles,
“ These were assertions of his ene-
“ mies :”—his being addicted to
“ swearing, scarce a word being unat-
“ tended

“ tended by a horrid oath, “ No sign
“ of a bad heart; only a foolish habit,
“ and easily conquered.”

“ Good heavens ! (exclaimed *Ma-*
“ *ria*) sure Lady *Gilford* could never
“ argue thus.”

“ No, no ; this conversation passed
“ with my brother, who had ever been
“ the sworn friend of Sir *William*.
“ ——I see resentment rising in your
“ bosom, Madam (continued she) ; I
“ know you do, I know you must
“ blame me for attempting to preju-
“ dice you in favour of Sir *Francis* ;
“ but had I not thought his very dif-
“ ferent from the principles of Sir
“ *William More* ; had I not thought
“ he now utterly despised that wretch ;
“ had I not believed him the most al-
“ tered man in the world ; that he loved
“ my

“ my dear Miss *Coventry* with the most
“ sincere and fervent passion, and that
“ he would suffer in his health by
“ concealing it longer ; I should never
“ have mentioned a subject which I
“ determined to drop, as soon as I saw
“ it was displeasing.”

Miss *Coventry* had no longer any cloud on her countenance ; she gracefully assured *Lavinia* of her intire friendship, and with a sweet smile begged she would proceed in a recital that had already filled her with impatience.

“ EIGHTEEN months have I been
“ teized, my dear Miss *Coventry*, with
“ the addresses of Sir *William More* ;
“ my brother, and consequently my
“ mother, till now strenuous in his fa-
“ vour ; notwithstanding which I al-
“ ways

“ ways declared myself very freely,
“ that I never would be his.

“ ABOUT ten months since, being
“ much pressed by the advocates of Sir
“ *William* to attend them at a ball he
“ gave, and finding it impossible to
“ get myself excused, I very reluctantly
“ complied.—We entered the room,
“ happily for me, before Sir *William* ;
“ who finding me engaged at his arri-
“ val, cursed the business that had de-
“ tained him, and would not dance
“ the whole evening, but sat in a cor-
“ ner by himself, sullen and out of hu-
“ mour except when he could engage
“ me in conversation, which I took
“ care should be very seldom.

“ I AM not going to describe the
“ gentleman with whom I danced, as
“ I know myself incapable of doing
“ him

“ him justice ; I shall only say, his
“ conversation had in it something so
“ elegantly refined, as that very even-
“ ing got him a footing in my esteem.

“ NOTWITHSTANDING the com-
“ pany did not part till three, I never
“ thought any time so short.

“ ON our way home, I asked my
“ brother if he knew the gentleman
“ who had been my partner.

“ HE said his name was *Gore*, and
“ on a visit to Mr. *Willace*.

“ HE has lost some near relation, I
“ suppose (replied I), by his being in
“ such close mourning.

“ HIS father (he returned) is lately
“ dead, and has left him an estate of
“ two

“ two thousand pounds a year ; but
“ methinks, *Levy*, you are very inqui-
“ sitive : I hope you do not mean to
“ let him supplant Sir *William*.”

“ SUPPLANT Sir *William* ! (repeated
“ I) surely, brother, you might have
“ spared the supposition. What is Sir
“ *William More* to me ? How often
“ shall I repeat to you, that I never
“ will think of him in the light you
“ propose him.”

“ PERVERSE girl !” said my mother.

“ MY brother did not confine him-
“ self, on this occasion, even to com-
“ mon decency ; he swore I should
“ marry his friend.

“ INDEED, child, you must (added
“ her Ladyship) ; you must, and shall
“ be Lady *More*.”

“ NEVER

“ NEVER, never, Madam ! whilst
“ I exist, I will never be Sir *William's* !”

“ THE coach stopping prevented a
“ very angry answer ; and as soon as
“ the door was opened, I stepped out,
“ and flew to my apartment, where
“ I spent the remainder of the night in
“ a manner not to be envied.

“ I NEVER closed my eyes to sleep
“ till seven ; and when *Sally* came to
“ call me at ten, I was enjoying that
“ refreshing insensibility.

“ HAVING awakened me by un-
“ drawing my curtains, I asked if
“ breakfast was ready. She told me
“ no ; but added, “ I have a letter for
“ you, Madam.”

“ I STARTED up in my bed, I broke
“ the seal with eagerness, and found it
“ con-

“ contained two cards ; one from Mr.
“ *Gore*, addressed to me, with polite
“ inquiries after my health ; the other
“ to my mother from Mrs. *Willace*, to
“ say they would be with us in the af-
“ ternoon, if her Ladyship was disen-
“ gaged.

“ I GOT up immediately, and went
“ to my mother’s room, which she
“ had just left, and I found her in the
“ breakfast-parlour with Sir *Francis*.

“ I GAVE the card intended for her
“ Ladyship, but said not a word of
“ mine, for fear of renewing their
“ suspicions.

“ AFTER having glanced it over,
“ she put it into the hands of my bro-
“ ther, who returned it with his opi-
“ nion, that they could not avoid see-
“ ing

“ing them, as Sir *William* and other
“company were expected.

“IN short, Madam, Mr. *Gore* came
“with them ; that visit was productive
“of a second ;—that second of a third ;
“and every time I saw him I was
“more and more convinced of his re-
“gard for me : we felt the warmest
“sentiments of friendship for each
“other, and did not attempt to con-
“ceal them.”

“How prettily, my dear, (said *Ma-*
“*ria*, interrupting her) you substitute
“the word Friendship to supply that
“of Love : but you are certainly right :
“the latter should always be founded
“on the former. Love is a mist which
“seldom continues longer than the
“morning of life. If friendship,
“like the sun, appears warm and
“bright

“ bright to succeed it, we are assured of
“ a fine day : if the contrary, storms,
“ clouds, and tempests, are to be ex-
“ pected.”

“ CHARMINGLY imagined ! (repli-
“ ed *Lavinia*.) Indeed, to confess the
“ truth, my friendship for Mr. *Gore*
“ might have bore another appellation ;
“ if I had not, like my dear Miss *Co-*
“ *ventry*, taken the terms of love and
“ friendship to be almost synonymous.

“ HOWEVER, give it which name
“ you please, the sentiment we mu-
“ tually felt was as mutually acknow-
“ ledged ; and nothing but my mo-
“ ther’s consent seemed wanting to
“ complete our happiness.

“ I HAD the pleasure to think Mr.
“ *Gore* enjoyed a considerable share in
“ her

“ her esteem.—How, indeed, could
“ he avoid it ? Were not her eyes, her
“ ears formed of the same materials
“ as those of her unhappy daughter ?

“ AT last he laid open his inten-
“ tions, and was listened to with some
“ degree of condescension, his offers
“ of settlement being extremely no-
“ ble : however, she told him, before
“ he could expect a definitive answer,
“ she must consult her son ; and if he
“ would give up the interest of Sir
“ *William More*, she should then have
“ no objection to his alliance.

“ BUT on consulting my brother,
“ and finding him more strenuous than
“ ever for his friend, her behaviour to
“ Mr. *Gore* underwent an immediate
“ change ; and without the least apo-
“ logy, she desired him to desist from
“ his

“ his visits, as Sir *Francis* had engaged
“ his promise to Sir *William More*, and
“ would by no means break it.

“ HE begged, he prayed, he in-
“ treated, he expostulated ; but in vain.
“ — Would my mother, he asked,
“ oblige me to marry a man to whom
“ I had so often declared my aversion ?
“ — He was answered, That intermed-
“ dlers were not looked on by her in
“ an advantageous light :—That they
“ had great reliance on my duty, if he
“ did not attempt to set it aside.

“ STRUCK to the soul by this reply,
“ he had scarce command enough over
“ himself to consider it was my mo-
“ ther who treated him with so much
“ disrespect: however, no sooner had
“ he made this reflection, than he left
“ the house, only saying, as his visits
“ were

“ were so very disagreeable, he would
“ endeavour not to repeat them.

“ ON my return from Miss *Leeson's*,
“ where I had spent the afternoon, I
“ was surprised not to find Mr. *Gore*
“ at the *Grange*, having appointed to
“ pass the evening with us : but what
“ did I feel, when told by my unkind
“ mother, and I must say cruel brother,
“ that if ever I expected to be
“ looked on as the child of the one,
“ or the sister of the other, I must absolutely
“ promise never to see Mr.
“ *Gore*, or at least speak to him again,
“ and instantly determine to accept
“ the hand of Sir *William*.

“ THE most explicit duty surely
“ could not have demanded a sacrifice
“ like this : I refused to make it,
“ and their anger was raised to such a
“ height,

“ that I was forced to fly to my cham-
“ ber to avoid its severe effects.

“ A LETTER from Mr. Gore, which
“ Sally conveyed to me, served to
“ heighten the load of grief I felt.—
“ How kind, how tender, how ge-
“ nerously did he intreat that I would
“ become the absolute mistress of his
“ fortune, as I already was of his
“ heart !—His very existence, he said,
“ depended on the resolution I had
“ made, never to have Sir *William*.

“ MY answer was dictated by a sin-
“ cere regard ; and another letter,
“ which I soon received, convinced me
“ it was far from displeasing him.

“ A REGULAR correspondence was
“ now settled between us, Sally being
“ our agent ; for though Mr. Gore

“ still continued with his friend Mr.
“ *Willace*, I was too closely watched
“ even for a single interview : and had
“ it not been for the pleasure his let-
“ ters afforded me, I must in this situ-
“ ation have found myself extremely
“ miserable, being reduced to the dis-
“ agreeable necessity of hearing pro-
“ fessions of love from the wretch I
“ most on earth despised.

“ SIR *William* was almost become
“ an inmate in our family, and my
“ brother fearing my aversion would
“ at length tire out his passion, deter-
“ mined with my mother’s acquies-
“ cence to oblige me to marry him, in
“ spite of objections.

“ THEY first tried to gain their ends
“ by affectionate intreaties. If any
“ method could have prevailed, it must
“ have

“ have been this: the large settlement
 “ and blaze of jewels, that next made
 “ an appearance on the persuasive list,
 “ were equally ineffectual.

“ THIS obstinacy, as my steady re-
 “ fusel was called, provoked Sir *Fran-*
 “ *cis* to such a height, that he swore I
 “ should marry his friend before the
 “ next *Thursday*, or he would not live
 “ in *England* another week.

“ MY mother, terrified by this
 “ threat, and seeing him leave the
 “ room in a rage, loaded me with re-
 “ proaches which it pains me to recol-
 “ lect.

“ I FELL on my knees, and with
 “ tears intreated she would not sacri-
 “ fice me to my brother's cruel ca-
 “ price ; that she would not give her

“ sanction to my being made the most
“ miserable of wretches.

“ VERY pretty, very pretty, Ma-
“ dam ! replied my mother : I per-
“ ceive whence all this proceeds ; but
“ if you will not have Sir *William*, you
“ shall not have *Gore*; depend on that.”

“ No, Madam, (said I, rising from
“ my supplicating posture) no, it is not
“ the idea of Mr. *Gore* that obstructs
“ my union with Sir *William* : before
“ I knew the one, I abhorred the
“ other. Reflect impartially but for
“ a moment : Can the knowledge of
“ so much worth as Mr. *Gore* possesses,
“ lessen my aversion to his detested
“ rival ?”

“ FIE, fie, girl ! Detested ! Is that
“ a proper word for the man who
“ must,

“ must, who shall, I am determined
“ shall be your husband ?”

“ THE hated Sir *William* coming in
“ at this instant, deaf to his sollicita-
“ tions, and almost to the commands
“ of my mother, I retired to my
“ chamber.”



C H A P. X.

“ HAVING composed my spirits,
“ I wrote to Mr. *Gore* what had
“ passed ; at the same time bidding
“ him depend on my resolution never
“ to take a step which would give him
“ reason, to upbraid me.

“ Mr. *Willace's* was not more than
“ a mile from the *Grange*, and *Sally*
“ returned in less than an hour :—but,
“ O my God ! with what an account
“ of Mr. *Gore's* frenzy ! Indeed the
“ few distracted lines he sent would
“ have spoke it, had she been silent.”

“ CAN

“CAN you remember (asked Miss
“*Coventry*) what they were?”

“PERFECTLY (replied *Lavinia*).”

“TALK to me not (said he) of next
“*Thursday*!—Talk to me not of your
“resolution! What, my gentle *Lavi-*
“*nia*, will avail your resistance?—
“Perhaps the deed on which I am re-
“solved may be wrong!—I will not,
“cannot drop it. Blame me not, my
“love! I must not lose you!—Angels
“protect and guard my dearest *La-*
“*vinia*!”

MARIA, who was kindly wiping
the tears from Miss *Gilford's* cheek,
soon found by the trickling drop that
glided down her own, that she had
caught the soft infection.

“ How my heart (said she) bleeds
“ for my distressed *Lavinia* ! But my
“ impatience will not suffer me to say
“ with what tender sympathy. Hea-
“ vens ! proceed, pray proceed ! I am
“ all fear, all dread ! Mr. *Gore* is cer-
“ tainly killed by the detested Sir *Wil-*
“ *liam*.”

“ No, my dear Miss *Coventry*, I am
“ not so very, very unhappy as that
“ would have made me : he still lives,
“ though for ever dead, for ever lost
“ to me.”

“ THANK God, he lives ! (cried
“ her friend) he cannot, shall not be
“ lost to you ! But tell me why you
“ accuse him of infidelity ?”

“ FAR be it from me to accuse him
“ of infidelity, replied *Lavinia* : hear
“ the

“ the sequel of my story, and be your-
“ self the judge.

“ No sooner had I read his letter,
“ than I was rendered insensible by the
“ violent shock it gave me. *Sally* did
“ not call any one to my assistance, but
“ laid me on the bed, and with her
“ endeavours to bring me to my senses,
“ I began to recover enough to know
“ what it was that occasioned my in-
“ sensibility.

“ It immediately occurred to me
“ that Sir *William* might be still with
“ my mother ; and not knowing what
“ I did, or paying the least attention
“ to *Sally*’s remonstrances, I hastened
“ down stairs, my dress in the greatest
“ disorder, and bursting open the door
“ I entered the room with such a wild-
“ ness in my air and manner, as quite
F 5 “ terrified

“terrified my mother : but not seeing
“the person there whom I came in
“pursuit of, my fears redoubled, and
“I exclaimed in words scarce articu-
“late,

“WHERE, O my God ! where is
“Sir *William* ?”

“HER Ladyship had the goodness,
“seeing me so agitated, to take my hand,
“and seating me by her, enquired into
“the cause of my perturbations ; but
“instead of answering her question,
“I repeated my own, Where, where
“is Sir *William* ? — How long has
“he left you ? Was he sent for ?”

“YES, (said my mother) he was
“sent for to a gentleman on particular
“business.”

“ THEN

“ THEN all is over ! all is over,
 “ Madam ! Yet haste to save the life
 “ of the man you favour ; and O save,
 “ if possible, the life of him for whom
 “ I would gladly resign my own !”

“ EXPLAIN, *Lavinia*, or how will
 “ it be possible to do either ?”

“ HAVING given the best account
 “ my fluttered spirits would allow, she
 “ left the room with a precipitation
 “ equal to my wishes.

“ AFTER her Ladyship had dis-
 “ patched half a dozen servants to
 “ prevent the fate of her intended son-
 “ in-law, she came back, doubtless
 “ with a design to read me a lecture
 “ on the dreadful effects of disobedi-
 “ ence, and to reprimand me for car-
 “ rying on a private correspondence

“ with Mr. *Gore*, but found a fitter
“ object for compassion than severity.

“ A SECOND time I was extended
“ on the floor, from which being re-
“ moved to my bed, I lay a fortnight
“ without the least hope of reco-
“ very. So violent a fever succeeded
“ my fainting, that I did not speak
“ during that time; yet I remember
“ my mother was very assiduous about
“ me, and more than once I saw her
“ shed tears.

“ ONE day, as she was sitting by
“ my bed-side, I took her hand, and
“ faintly pronounced the name of
“ Mr. *Gore*.

“ I KNOW, *Levy*, (replied her Lady-
“ ship) what you would say, and give
“ you my honour that Mr. *Gore* is safe.”

“ I LIFTED

“ I LIFTED up my hands and eyes,
“ in gratitude to heaven for this in-
“ telligence.

“ I NOW every day gathered strength.
“ I ~~w~~anted much an opportunity of
“ speaking to *Sally* ; but she appeared
“ as studious to avoid, as I did to pro-
“ cure it.

“ HER Ladyship being called to a
“ person on business, I said to her,
“ Come hither, *Sally* ; why have you
“ not before this contrived some means
“ to tell me how Mr. *Gore* came off
“ in the duel he had with Sir *William* ?”

“ DUEL ! replied she ; a duel,
“ Madam ! I know of none. These
“ gentlemen have never fought.”

“ THANK

“THANK God ! said I ; then I
“ may still be happy. I am sure no-
“ thing less than Sir *William*’s resign-
“ ing his pretensions could have pre-
“ vented the event I dreaded.”

“ I FANCY it is not so neither, Ma-
“ dam ; for Sir *William* is here every
“ day to enquire after your health : it
“ was not five minutes since I saw him
“ below.”

“ You surprise me, *Sally* !—Not
“ fight !—Sir *William* come still to the
“ house !——Have you received no
“ letters for me ?”

“ I HAVE had one, Madam, more
“ than a week, but could not find an
“ opportunity to deliver it till now.”

“ MY

“ MY mother coming in at that instant, made me hide it in the bed, till I could find a proper time to read it, which, alas ! came but too soon.

“ THE surprise, the astonishment, the grief I felt was inexpressible, when, instead of telling me what he suffered from my illness, to be told, and in the most aggravating terms, that I was no longer worthy his regard ; that he had once thought my heart the throne of constancy, but found it was only an appearance of that virtue.—He bid me still be happy, though it was not now in my power, nor in that of any other woman, to make him so.”

“ OH the horrid ingrate ! exclaimed Miss *Coventry* ; how I hate, how I detest him !”

“ LET

“LET not appearances deceive you
“ (replied *Lavinia*); I cannot bear that
“ he should lie under your displeasure
“ even for a moment. I am impatient to clear him ; but we must talk
“ on this subject in the carriage : we
“ do not seem to consider it is six miles
“ to *Weatly*, and that the sun has almost
“ kissed the sea.”

MARIA, who could have sat till midnight without counting hours whilst she listened to *Lavinia*, thus reminded, arose from her humble seat, when a rustling of the boughs made them turn round, and they started at seeing a man within a few yards of them.

THE mild sweetness that shone upon his face forbade fear. Some thousand years before he might have been mistaken for the Genius of the woods —

THE

THE silver beard which hung halfway down his waist caught their attention, and *Lavinia* whispered *Maria* to observe his graceful movement, as he came towards them.

WHEN he spoke, they felt a veneration for him they could by no means account for.

“ You are doubtless surprised, my
“ daughters, (said he) at the sight of a
“ man of such uncommon appearance.
“ Believe me, (turning to Miss *Gil-*
“ *ford*) I came not to this place to be
“ a listener : No ; I came to contem-
“ plate my own misfortunes, and weep
“ afresh at their remembrance : but
“ you have robbed them of their daily
“ tribute ; your story has stole from me
“ those tears which were due to them.”

“ I AM

“ I AM sorry, Sir, (she replied) tho’
“ inadvertently, that I should have in
“ the least distressed you ; finding too,
“ by your words, you are not on your
“ own account exempt from trouble.”

“ INDEED I am not (returned the
“ pious stranger) ; but though I have
“ had a double portion of afflictions,
“ I bless God continually, and doubt
“ not the wisdom of his design in
“ sending them.—Pardon me, Ladies,
“ I had a request to make ; particu-
“ larly, Madam, I must address my-
“ self to you,” added he, speaking to
Miss *Gilferd*.

“ It is already granted, Sir,” she
replied with a most enchanting grace.

“ You know not, my good young
“ Lady, the extent of my boldness ;
“ yet

“ yet term it not idle curiosity, when
“ I tell you I wish much to hear the
“ sequel of that relation you have
“ been just giving your friend, and to
“ which I listened not from a bad
“ motive.—You say (continued he)
“ you can clear the seeming infidelity
“ of your lover.”

“ INDEED, Sir, I can ; and if you
“ will meet us here to-morrow after-
“ noon, I will give you the sequel
“ you desire.”

“ EXCELLENT goodness ! he re-
“ turned : I pray heaven all your
“ distresses may soon have an end, and
“ that you may again meet and be
“ united to the person who has the
“ happiness to be esteemed by you !—
“ And may this other flower, this sis-
“ ter-sweetness, (turning to Miss Co-
“ ventry,

“ ventry, taking a hand of each) make
 “ happy some man deserving so much
 “ innocence, so much beauty ! O my
 “ God ! such a one you once lent me !”

“ AH, my good Sir ! (said *Maria*)
 “ you afflict us greatly. See Miss *Gil-*
 “ *ford*’s eyes ; look at mine ; they
 “ overflow to think a man so worthy
 “ as you seem to be, should labour
 “ under the oppression of sorrow. Do
 “ not deny me a boon I am about to
 “ ask ; if you should, it would almost
 “ break my heart.”

“ SPEAK, my child (said the vene-
 “ rable stranger) ; if within my power
 “ to oblige you, such sweetness shall
 “ not ask in vain.”

“ I AM going, Sir, (replied she with
 “ an enchanting smile) to be very in-
 “ quisitive.

“quisitive. In the first place, will you
“condescend to inform us to what na-
“tion you belong ? for I imagine you
“are not a native of this kingdom.”

HE smiled at her surmise.—“I have
“never (returned he) seen any other
“kingdom ; but I can easily account,
“Madam, for your mistake. My
“uncommon habit, and this length
“of hair (pointing to his chin) must
“make me appear extremely strange
“to people who are conversant with
“the world : but as I am not obliged
“to study its fashions, my only care is
“to provide the absolute necessities of
“life. You will scarce credit me (con-
“tinued he) when I tell you, that, ex-
“cept yourselves and three other per-
“sons, I have not seen a human face
“these five years.”

WHERE

“WHERE, said *Lavinia*; Where,
“said *Maria*; can you have been all
“this time sequestered?”

“BEFORE I discover that, (he re-
“plied) you must give me a solemn
“promise ~~never~~ to disclose it without
“my permission. On these condi-
“tions, to-morrow, when you return,
“I will lead you to my retreat.”

“WE subscribe to them with plea-
“sure,” said they: “Though (added
“Miss *Coventry*) I now perceive the
“boon I intended to ask must be given
“up. I was going (pursued she) to
“petition you would go with us to my
“father’s. He is a good man; he re-
“veres good men: how would he be
“delighted with your company! If you
“should then weep, his tears would
“fall with yours: he has lost a wife,

“I a

“ I a mother, for whom they will ever
“ flow.”

“ YOUR father has lost a wife, you
“ say, my good young Lady : I too
“ have lost one, the pattern of every
“ virtue, every excellence. Perhaps so
“ was his ; but has he lost children,
“ friends, fortune, all that in this life
“ is desirable ? O no ! he has not ;
“ you are his daughter. What a blessing,
“ what a treasure has he still
“ left ! How unfit for companions !
“ Whenever we sat down to enumerate
“ our misfortunes, his tale of woe
“ would soon be told, whilst mine
“ would last from morn to eve, from
“ eve to morn, a summer’s day.”

THE compassionate tear quivered in
the bright eyes of *Lavinia* and *Maria* : they longed to know what those
mis-

misfortunes were, and why he had banished himself from mankind ; but were forced to suspend their curiosity, as the night made such swift approaches.

AFTER renewing their promise of secrecy, also of meeting early the following day, they parted ; the Ladies regained their carriage, whilst the stranger struck into the thickest part of the woods.

IT is impossible to say how much they wished for the next afternoon : they thought nor talked of any thing but their late adventure, till arrived within a mile of *Weatly*, when it was banished the breast of *Lavinia* by the sight of Sir *William More*, seated in his Phaeton, but indebted to a servant from undergoing the same fate with
that

that presumptuous youth whose name his carriage bore ; the Baronet's head being nearly as giddy with claret, as the offspring of *Apollo* was with ambition.

PASSING the chariot where sat his mistress, he attempted to speak ; but it was only an attempt.

“ HEAVENS ! (said Miss *Coventry*)
“ what a beast is that which has just
“ passed us ! Lord help me ! Why,
“ my dear Miss *Gilford*, do you change
“ colour ?”

“ AH Madam ! (replied *Lavinia*)
“ that is the detested Sir *William*, re-
“ turned to make me miserable. All
“ my reliance now is on Sir *Francis*,
“ who has assured me he will no more
“ interest himself in his favour.”

“ WELL then, my dear, why are
“ you apprehensive ?”

“ I CERTAINLY ought not to alarm
“ myself (returned Miss *Gilford*) ; but
“ in his very appearance there is a
“ something to me strangely terrify-
“ ing.”

THE remainder of their journey she
seemed so much fluttered, and so very
uneasy, that Miss *Coventry*, who thought
it possible she might meet Sir *William*
if she returned to the *Grange*, obliged
her to pass the night at *Hartly-Row*,
after sending an excuse to Lady *Gil-*
ford by the servant who attended
them, informing her Ladyship *Lavinia*
would spend the next day with Miss
Coventry.

WHEN

WHEN the chariot stopped at the door, doctor *Edgcome* presented his hand, and helped the Ladies to alight.

I OUGHT to ask my readers pardon for not introducing this worthy gentleman to them since the death of Mrs. *Coventry*, especially as he had been a great assistant to his patron in forming the mind of his amiable daughter. The love he bore that young Lady was little inferior to what might be felt by a parent : this he shewed in refusing a valuable living, which, had he accepted, must have divided him from the dearest of his friends.

DOCTOR *Edgcome*'s conversation softened many uneasy reflections in the breast of Mr. *Coventry*, his disposition being extremely chearful ; which

cheerfulness he derived from an approving heart. His glass had few remaining sands to run : already he attained an honourable old age, yet hitherto such a favourite of Providence, that he had not groaned under any of its pains and inconveniences.

CHAP.



C H A P. XI.

MR. *Coventry*, as his daughter did not return till the clock had struck nine, began to be alarmed, fearing some accident ; but when she entered the room, and flew into his parental arms, expanded to receive her, every uneasy sensation vanished.

“ Is this the way (said doctor *Edg-*
“ *come*, smiling) that you punish our
“ runaway ? Your daughter would be
“ spoiled, was it not for me.”

“ INDEED, Sir, (cried *Maria*) you
“ really frightened me ; but I should

“ have known, if my dear Papa had
“ been displeased with his girl, you
“ would not have told me so with that
“ serenity of countenance.”

“ Love you ! (interrupted the face-
“ tious old gentleman) Really, my
“ friend, (turning to Mr. *Coventry*) I
“ was in hopes we might have passed
“ some years longer together ; but that
“ will be now impossible ; for after a
“ young fellow like me is discovered
“ to be a lover, the world will talk,
“ whilst he continues in the same house
“ with the object of his passion.”

“ UPON my honour, (said Mr. *Co-*
“ *ventry*) as you state the matter, Doc-
“ tor, I know not how to advise. Miss
“ *Gilford*, what is your opinion ?”

“ WHY

“ WHY really, Sir, since I must
“ speak, though I should be sorry to
“ fill you with suspicions, I believe if
“ the doctor leaves you, there is some
“ danger of *Maria*’s eloping with
“ him ; for by what I have observed,
“ their passion seems to be mutual.”

“ Miss *Gilford* says true, Sir (re-
“ plied *Maria*, laughing). You had bet-
“ ter, my dear Papa, consider on this
“ matter, or a trip to *Scotland* may be
“ the consequence ; for though the
“ good doctor is of age, yet as I am
“ hardly eighteen, I cannot dispose of
“ myself without your consent.”

NEVER was an evening more agree-
ably passed, or a company more de-
lighted with each other. Mr. *Coven-*
try’s spirits, though never in the highest
key, may be called sweetly in tune ;

not unlike that kind of harmony, which gently vibrates on the ear, and never fails to lull the mind into a pleasing calm, without raising those lively ideas which are inspired by more sprightly notes.

THE doctor was proposing a party at whist, when a servant entered with a letter, which just then came from the Office.

“*LORD L— !*” said Mr. *Coventry*, looking at the superscription.

THE doctor, who had laid aside his pipe to engage at cards, now relighted it, and the Ladies in a low voice were talking of their next day’s excursion, when Mr. *Coventry* having perused the letter gave it to his daughter, saying, “*Lord L—, my dear, has given us a new relation.*”

“*Not*

“NOT a wife, I hope,” cried doctor *Edgcome*, throwing down his pipe ; and being answered in the affirmative, “If that is the case, (continued he) even I cannot be safe ; for since that knave *Cupid* has with his feathers tickled the heart of a batchelor of fifty-five, may not fourscore be in equal danger ?—I protest, my little cherub, (to *Maria*) this piece of news has amazingly discomposed me ! Well, I believe I must run from you at last.”

“SUPPOSING I tell you, friend, (said Mr. *Coventry*, smiling at his humour) that Lord *L*— never intended to live a batchelor, and has been long engaged to the Lady he now married, their union only delayed from family reasons.”

“ I AM satisfied, he replied, and
“ now will venture to ask what kind
“ of woman he has made choice of.”

“ ONE (returned Mr. *Coventry*)
“ every way calculated to make him
“ happy.—What think you of the
“ amiable Lady *Mary Hastings* ?”

“ I AM not acquainted with her
“ Ladyship (answered the doctor) ; but
“ common Fame, I know, has been
“ very loud in her praises.”

“ COMMON Fame (said Mr. *Coven-*
“ *try*) is called a common Liar : but
“ you shall be a judge if she has not
“ told truth in regard to Lady *Mary*.
“ I expect her Ladyship with her Lord
“ next week : their coming will make
“ me vastly happy, as my dear child
“ confines herself too much with me.”

“ O SAY

“O SAY not this,” cried the amiable *Maria*, who had just then finished reading the letter : “ Was I to devote every hour, nay, every minute of my life, would it be too much for such a father ?”

“ MY dearest child, (said the enraptured parent, hugging her to his breast) such duty and goodness were certainly sent to compensate for the loss of thy blessed mother.”

DOCTOR *Edgcome* not approving the turn this conversation seemed likely to take, prudently gave it another, by asking if Lord and Lady *L*— brought any company with them.

MR. *Coventry* replied, that Mr. *Stor-
mont* and Miss *Hastings* were proposed of the party ; the former a ward of

“ his Lordship, the latter related to his
“ Lady.

“ MR. *Stormont* ! (said the doctor).
“ I fancy I was acquainted with his
“ father. Can you tell me if his fa-
“ mily are of *Worcester* ?”

BEING answered affirmatively, “ I
“ know nothing (pursued he) of this
“ young branch, but will aver the old
“ stock is as good and honest as any in
“ the kingdom. Nay, let me tell my
“ Primrose and Daffodil, they must
“ keep a strict guard at the door of
“ their hearts : should he be half so
“ handsome as his father, they will
“ else play them a runaway trick.”

BOTH Ladies promising to take his
advice, the conversation continued
cheerful and entertaining till that hour
arrived

arrived at which they retired for the night.

Miss *Coventry* and *Lavinia* being now at liberty to chat with freedom, began to talk over the occurrences of the passed day, and again wished for the hour which was to carry them to the Woods.

HERE I will suppose my reader, especially if a female, not to be so void of curiosity as to regret my passing over the necessary orders given by Miss *Coventry* for the reception of her noble relations ; a morning visit from Miss *Jones's*, or their thousand professions of friendship to *Maria* ; in order to bring that Lady and Miss *Gilford* once more to the place of rendezvous.

BEING

BEING arrived at the narrow lane, Miss *Coventry* ordered the servants to wait, as they had done the preceding day ; and entering the woods found there the venerable Sage, leaning on a staff, and so deeply buried in contemplation, that he never lifted his eyes from the ground, or knew any thing of their approach, till they spoke, which roused him from his reverie.

AFTER answering their inquiries for his health, he said they were very punctual to their appointment.

“ WE would not have made you
“ wait, Sir, (replied *Lavinia*) for the
“ universe ; but we are not to stay
“ here : you last night was so good to
“ say, you would conduct us to your
“ house.”

“ To

“To my house ! (he repeated) Yes,
“so I will ; but you must not expect,
“my children, the edifice noble, rooms
“lofty, or fretted roofs : yet he who
“built it can, at his own pleasure,
“make even the meanest cot more desirable than the most splendid palace.”

HAVING said this, he led them through several intricate paths, and at length struck into one so extremely narrow, as made it difficult to pass, the end of which they did not gain for many minutes, and were then unutterably surprised to find it terminate in a rock : nor could they perceive any way by which to proceed. They looked on each other, and for the first time began to entertain thoughts not in favour of their conductor, which were strengthened by his observing a strict silence.

WHAT

WHAT would they have now given to have been at *Weatly* ! blaming themselves, no doubt, for having rashly ventured to so retired a place with a person they had never seen but once before. His venerable aspect, that goodness which they imagined so conspicuous in every look and word, should not, ought not to have been so much relied on : — Appearances often deceive : — How easy for a villain to put on the mask of virtue !

UNABLE to communicate their dreadful apprehensions to each other, they were sinking with fear, when the person who raised it taking a key from his pocket, applied it to the rock, which opened, as if by enchantment, sufficient for two to enter. “ O my God !
“ (cried *Maria* in a low voice) what
“ is to become of us !”

“ LET

“LET us rely on Heaven,” whisper’d Miss *Gilford*. She could add no more : the stranger offered her his hand, saying he would return in an instant and fetch her friend.

LAVINIA knew that resistance could be of no service : they were now too much in his power, and even to shew a distrust would be impolitic ; for which reason she suffered him to lead her, though with trembling steps.

Miss *Coventry* saw her enter the dreadful cavern ! What at that moment was her emotion ! Affrighted, terrified, she looked on every side to see if there was no way to escape ; but none appeared, except the little path by which they came ; the wood being so thick on either hand, that it was absolutely impossible to penetrate it. She
had

had once thoughts of trying the swiftness of her feet, nay, had actually retracted some steps, when the voice of Friendship bid her return. "Could she leave (it asked) in that shocking place her dear *Lavinia*?" This single question determined her; she came back, resolved to share the same fate with her friend, and offered up a fervent prayer to the Almighty for his protection. The petition came from a heart too pure to be rejected. Whilst her lovely eyes were looking to that heaven from whence she expected succour, half her fears vanished; and when the old gentleman again approached her, she did not feel those perturbations she had done a few minutes since.

"COME, my child, (said he, with
"ineffable benignity) condescend to
"enter

“ enter my humble cell. This is my
“ house. I bade you ~~not~~ expect a lofty
“ dome. The head of Ambition has
“ never yet entered my dwelling. Be-
“ lieve me, Madam, the parade and
“ bustle we must necessarily meet in
“ the world, though ever so fortunate,
“ cannot compensate for the tranquil
“ ease I here enjoy.”

Miss *Coventry*, who had now lost sight of every fear, listened, whilst he spoke, with reverential pleasure ; and by his assistance reached the last of about twenty steps, that were either worn by Time, or hewn by Art, to an easy declivity, which led to a small neat room, whose craggy sides were covered with the bark of trees, floored with the same materials.

A COUCH,

A COUCH, three chairs, a little table, and a book-case, completed the furniture.

HERE the Ladies were again reunited ; they gazed on each other with astonishment ; they appeared to wonder ; but their surprise was unattended by suspicion.

As soon as the Hermit had seated his fair guests, he presented them with cake and sweet-meats ; nor was a glass of excellent Madeira, which he insisted on their drinking, at all unseasonable, they having lately suffered so much from their timidity : but with all their engaging rhetoric, they could not prevail on their abstemious host to taste the wine.

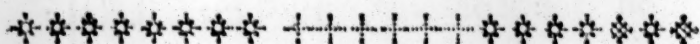
“ I WOULD”

“ I would oblige you, (said he)
“ was it in my power ; but that is an
“ indulgence I never allow myself,
“ unless my health or spirits absolutely
“ require it, which is not now the case :
“ on the contrary, my heart feels a
“ lightness to which it has been long
“ unaccustomed.”

“ PARDON me, my dear young
“ Lady, (to *Lavinia*) I find myself
“ strangely impatient for the sequel of
“ your pretty narrative. I intreat you
“ will remove the cloud which seems
“ to hang over the conduct of your
“ lover. Methinks I am interested in
“ his favour. To me he appears de-
“ serving. He must not, cannot be
“ unamiable.”

Miss *Gilford's* eyes sparkled the
approbation of her soul, at the praises
given

given Mr. *Gore* by this good old man ;
and without waiting to be solicited a
second time, she began to satisfy his
curiosity in the following manner.



C H A P. XII.

“ I LEFT off yesterday at my receiv-
“ ing a letter from Mr. *Gore* by the
“ hands of *Sally* ; the contents so un-
“ expected, and I then thought so
“ extremely cruel, that I will not at-
“ tempt to tell you what I felt on this
“ occasion. I suppressed my tears be-
“ fore my mother and brother : but
“ when alone, they were my only
“ consolation.

“ I OFTEN

“ I OFTEN asked *Sally* if she had
“ heard nothing of Mr. *Gore* ; which
“ she was sure to answer in the nega-
“ tive. Indeed, I have since wondered
“ at my blindness : the least penetra-
“ tion might have discovered that she
“ was now more in Sir *William*’s in-
“ terest than in mine : but my eyes
“ were not open to her baseness, till
“ her own conscience could no longer
“ keep the horrid secret.

“ ONE evening my spirits being ex-
“ tremely low, I went to my room
“ as soon as the cloth was removed ;
“ and taking up a volume of *Shake-*
“ *spear*, I opened it at his excellent
“ play intitled *Much Ado about No-*
“ *thing*.

“ HERO’S distress affected me : I
“ wept as I read it.—*Sally*, who I had
“ em-

“ employed about some work of which
“ I was grown tired, begged I would
“ put down my book : “ I am sure,
“ Madam, (said she) it must be a miserable melancholy one to make you
“ cry so. I could never in my born
“ days endure to read stories of ghosts
“ and murders ; they so befrighten
“ me, that for all the good in the
“ world I should see them when I go
“ to bed.”

“ SMILING at her ignorant simplicity, I replied, “ It is neither one
“ or the other, *Sally* ; yet it affects
“ me more than if I had read a relation
“ of all the ghosts that have appeared
“ the last hundred years.”

“ LORD, Madam ! (said she) if it
“ would not be making too bold, I
“ should surely ask what it was about.”

“ THINK-

“THINKING no more than just to
“ amuse myself with the remarks of
“ such a person, I began to relate the
“ heads of what I had been reading,
“ to which I observed she listened
“ with great attention, and really
“ made some judicious remarks on
“ the whimsical characters of *Benedick*
“ and *Beatrice* : but when I came to
“ that part where *Margaret* is pitched
“ on by *Don John* to represent *Hero*
“ to the deceived *Claudio*, a death-
“ like paleness overspread her face,
“ the work dropped from her hand,
“ and she cried out with eyes staring
“ as if she had really seen a spectre,
“ I am guilty ! You have discovered
“ me, Madam ! I cannot hope for
“ your forgiveness !” and down she
“ fell on her knees before me.

“ WHAT is the matter ? (exclaim-
“ ed I) what ails the girl ?” though in-
“ deed I was scarce ever more terrified.

“ THE matter, Miss *Lavinia* ! (said
“ the conscious wretch, sobbing) To
“ be sure you know it already, or could
“ never have told my wicked plot to
“ deceive Mr. *Gore*. Aye, aye, Ma-
“ dam, I knew who you meant by
“ *Margaret*.”

“ GOOD God ! I shuddered with hor-
“ ror and amazement ; but perceiving
“ I must owe her confession to a sup-
“ position that I was before acquainted
“ with her crimes, I bade her in a stern
“ voice get up, and if she hoped for
“ my pardon to tell me every particular
“ of her business, and who it was that
“ made her commit so black a trans-
“ action.

“ AH !

“AH ! what a scene of iniquity
“ had she to disclose ! I shall falter
“ in a repetition.”

“PROCEED, my dear child,” said
the Sage. An assenting nod pre-
vented the same request from Miss
Coventry.

“I WAS obliged (continued *Lavi-*
“*nia*) to repeat my commands several
“ times before I could get her from
“ my knees : she then trembled so as
“ to be forced to support herself a-
“ gainst the back of a chair.

“I AM ignorant, Madam, (said the
“ agitated creature) who can have be-
“ trayed me to you ; but this I am sure,
“ I have never had my right mind since
“ Sir *William More* overcame my
“ honesty.”

H 2

“WHAT !

“WHAT ! (cried I, not misunderstanding her words, but as it seems misapplying them) poor wretch !
“hast thou then fallen a victim to that vilest of men ! O *Sally, Sally* ! and
“Sir *William More* has really seduced thee ! This I did not know before.”

“God be thanked ! God be thanked ! (replied she sobbing) I ben’t what I believe you take me to be, Madam. No, no, I have preserved my *virtue* ; though I did, I did, I did, to be sure, lose my name, when I consented to betray and ruin so sweet a young Lady.”

“A MINUTE since I trembled for the poor wretch : now every fear redoubled on my own account.

“SPEAK,

“SPEAK, (cried I) explain yourself;
“but first reach me some water.” She
“tottered to the stand, and bringing
“me the bottle, I swallowed a mouth-
“full, which probably kept me from
“fainting. “Now (said I) go on,
“conceal nothing from me, and per-
“haps I may forgive you.”

“I COULD not prevent her from
“again falling on her knees, to bless
“me for what I had half promised;
“and I really believe she was a very
“sincere penitent.

“SEEING my impatience, and be-
“ing often ordered to rise, she resumed
“her place at the back of my chair,
“and proceeded thus :

“You may remember, Madam,
“that the last afternoon you ever sent

“ me to Mr. *Willace's*, I brought back
“ a letter from Mr. *Gore*, which made
“ you very ill ; and I thought then if so
“ be as how I should have the whole
“ *univarse* to do you harm, I would
“ not have earned it : but alackaday !
“ I verily believe *James* must have
“ given love-powder to bewitch me,
“ or I should never have turned about
“ to be of another mind. To be sure,
“ Madam, I had a little kindness for
“ Mr. *James* ; but never thought as
“ how he had any for me, because he
“ was very often kissing *Susan* the
“ dairy-maid, and she made her brags
“ all about that he was her sweet-
“ heart.”

“ PRITHEE, girl, (said I) teize me
“ no longer with affairs of which I
“ want not to be informed.”

“ My

“MY dear Lady, pray suffer me to
“speak for myself (replied she), or
“you will mayhap think me more
“*baser* than I am.”

“I FOUND she would go on in her
“own way, so I bid her proceed.

“THE night you was taken ill,
“Mr. *James*, after I had put my
“Lady to bed, brought me a letter :
“at the same time he told me as how,
“Don’t be a fool, my dear *Sally* ; I
“love you better than any earthly crea-
“ture : but we can never marry till
“we have got a little money before-
“hand ; therefore you must do as his
“Honour desires.”

“To be sure I was glad to hear him
“speak so kindly ; but before I could
“ask him if he meant me true, he

“ was gone out of the room ; and,
“ God be thanked ! being brought
“ pretty well to my pen, I opened the
“ letter he left, and was quite bewil-
“ dered to find it come from so great a
“ gentleman as Sir *William*.

“ I READ it over and over, and at
“ last understood, that if I would set
“ out and come to him directly, he
“ would make it worth my while.
“ So when I came to this part, I said
“ to myself, I would not go on any
“ consideration, as his Honour could
“ not want me for good : but reading
“ and reading on, I found he did not
“ intend me any hurt, because he said
“ as how he knew Mr. *James* was my
“ sweet-heart, and had desired him to
“ come along with me, because I
“ should not have any doubts about
“ my *virtue*.”

“ So

“ So you went (said I) at this summons, did you, *Sally* ?”

“ INDEED, indeed, I resolved not to go, Madam ; *for why*, I knew you thought his Honour a very bad man : but Mr. *James* coming just then was very angry, and said as how if that was the case, and I would not go, he would give my Lady warning the next day.

“ WHAT could I do, Madam ?—
“ What could I do ? (said the weeping criminal) if *James* had gone away, I should never have had a minute’s heart’s ease afterwards : so I did—I did—I did tell him, that if so be as how he would not give warning, I would go.”

“ WELL, and you did go ?”

“YES, Madam, I cannot say but I
“did.”

“LORD help me ! (said I) but
“proceed ; and again I charge you,
“hide nothing from me.”

“I HELD by *James* all the way.
“As you chuse, Madam, to have me
“particular, upon my word, and in-
“deed, I will be very particular.
“Yet though Mr. *James* was with me,
“and I held by his arm, I shook
“all over with fear ; and every now
“and then fancied I saw *ghostes's*, tho’
“I suppose there is no such things in
“these parts. And though it is but
“a short mile to Sir *William’s* house, I
“thought as how the road grew longer
“and longer, and was ready to die
“when *James* let me in through the
“great gate.

“HIS

“ HIS Honour was sitting at a table spread all over with golden guineas.

“ THOUGH I was but a servant, he got up and was so good-humoured as to kiss me, and shook my sweet-heart by the hand, saying, whilst we bowed and curtsied, “ I am glad to see you, Mr. *James*, especially as you have brought your pretty *Sally* with you ;” and his Honour swore we were a comely couple, and then was so kind to say he would stand up for our first boy.

“ I WISH, (said *James*, whilst I to be sure, Madam, was quite daunted, and blushed like any thing) I wish it was come to that : but your Worship must know I am but a poor man, and *service* is no inheritance :

“and tho’ I love *Sally* as my life, yet
“before we marry, I am afraid I
“shall be forced to accept of the offer
“Squire *Jones* made me yesterday.”

“WHAT was that?” asked his
Honour.

“IT was (said *James*) to go to *Antigua* for ten years, for which I am
“to have five hundred pounds.”

“O MY dear injured Lady! (continued the poor creature) I thought
“those dreadful words would have
“been my death: indeed, I could not
“help crying, though I hid it with
“my apron, which Sir *William* took
“from my face, and said, “Indeed,
“*James*, you are to blame to let such
“pretty eyes weep for you.”

“JAMES

“ JAMES wiped his eyes too, and
“ said he wished as how he could help
“ it.

“ COME, come, (cried his Honour)
“ let us try, Mrs. Sally, if you and I
“ can prevent honest *James* from go-
“ ing over sea. Now tell me, child,
“ what would you do to keep him at
“ home ; and, what is more, marry
“ and live comfortably with him ?”

“ I SAID, I said, I cannot deny it,
“ Madam, I said I would do any thing
“ in my power ; for I thought as how
“ I already saw him on the cruel
“ ocean.

“ WELL, then, it is in your power
“ to keep him always with you (said
“ his Honour, taking one of my hands,
“ whilst *James* held the other) ; and
“ this

“ this gold (pointing to the table) is all
“ your own, my girl, if you will assist
“ me in a good turn.”

“ OH heaven ! (cried I) take care,
“ take care, *Sally*, that you repeat
“ every word this vile Sir *William* said,
“ when he told the black affair you
“ was to execute.”

“ ALL this time the creature wept
“ very plentifully, and wiping her
“ eyes told me, she had not forgot a
“ word his Honour had said, and would
“ tell me just as he spoke them.

“ SALLY, (said he) you know I am
“ very soon to marry your young Lady :
“ you know too that *Gore* pretends to
“ dispute her heart with me. Now by
“ some means or other he has disco-
“ vered that *Thursday* is fixed upon by
“ Lady

“ Lady *Gilford* and Sir *Francis* for my
“ nuptials with *Lavinia*, and this af-
“ ternoon he sent for me. “ Kill, or
“ be killed,” was the word. Having
“ no inclination to either, I would have
“ argued the case ; but as nothing
“ would content the fellow, I was
“ forced to forge an instant falsehood.
“ I said, Miss *Gilford* was not worth
“ our swords or resentment, and that
“ last evening I discovered her perfidy ;
“ that she had another lover, and ac-
“ tually met him every night at a little
“ window which looked into the
“ grove.”

“ O GOOD your Honour ! (said I)
“ how could you say such a thing ?
“ Sure my Lady never met a Christian
“ man in that place in her born days.”

“ I KNOW
2

“ I KNOW it, *Sally* (replied he) ;
“ but this is not now the matter. Tho’
“ it was a long while before *Gore* would
“ give the least credit to my tale, he
“ now begins to believe it ; for I have
“ absolutely promised, that to-morrow-
“ night at eleven, the time I told him
“ when I was informed they generally
“ met, his eyes, his ears, should con-
“ vince him how little worthy she was
“ of his or my regard. Now it re-
“ mains on you, *Sally*, to help me to
“ fulfil this engagement. At the time
“ and place appointed do you be there,
“ dressed in your Lady’s crimson hat
“ and cloak : lean out at the window ;
“ *James* shall be under ; but speak
“ low, that your voice may not be dis-
“ covered. He will say to you, “ My
“ dearest Miss *Gilford*, why am I not
“ in a rank of life to appear openly
“ your

“ your lover ?”—Then answer him,
“ that you would prefer him to a
“ prince, even if he was ten times
“ meaner than he is. Say, that you
“ pretend a passion for *Gore* only to
“ hide your love to him ; and say also,
“ you hate, you despise me. Call me
“ a villain, or any other bad name ;
“ but be sure, *Sally*, you do not for-
“ get to speak all this extremely soft.”

C H A P.



C H A P. XIII.

HERE *Lavinia* was interrupted by a voice which exclaimed, "Vile ! inexorable ! plotting villain !" At the same time a man of about five-and-twenty appeared before them, and flung himself at the feet of Miss *Gilford*, who, as soon as she heard, or rather saw him, gave a violent scream, and fell to the ground.

MARIA, though terrified almost to a degree of frenzy, flew to support her fallen, lifeless friend : but she was already in the arms of him who had occasioned this disorder. He wept over her ; he intreated, as if she still heard him,

him, that she would live; that she would forgive his weak credulity.— These and some other words to the same effect convinced Miss *Coventry*, the person whom she now saw was the identical Mr. *Gore*.

HIS eyes expressed generosity, sensibility, tenderness: the last all showered on *Lavinia*, who was by this time laid upon the couch, and so much recovered as to be able to bless her transported lover with so sweet a look, as would have repayed him for ten years of anguish.

As for the old gentleman, he rubbed his hands, stroaked his beard, and once more produced that same bottle of Madeira which made its appearance in a former chapter.

“COME,

“COME, my children, (said the
 “good man) after the fright my ne-
 “phew has occasioned you, another
 “glass will be absolutely necessary.”

“YOUR nephew! Mr. *Gore* your
 “nephew! (repeated *Lavinia*) Hea-
 “ven and earth! what new wonders!
 “Certainly (cried Miss *Coventry*) we
 “are transported into Fairy land; every
 “thing we hear and see is strange and
 “surprising.”

“INDEED, my dear Miss *Gilford*,
 “(said Mr. *Gore*) this venerable, this
 “good man is my uncle. It is to him
 “I am indebted for every sentiment
 “deserving approbation. It is by his
 “advice that I have been with-held
 “from many actions which would
 “have given me pain, when I came to
 “reflect on them; yet there is one
 “debt

“ debt greater than the rest, which I
“ mention last : It is to him I owe my
“ present happiness. Had it not been for
“ him, I should still have thought you
“ false, blinded by the *Machiavelian*
“ art of a cursed contriver ; but Sir
“ *William More* still lives.”

“ AND still shall live, if his God
“ permit (interrupted the uncle of
“ Mr. Gore) : but we will talk on this
“ topick some other time.—You broke
“ in upon us, young gentleman, at a
“ very interesting part of Miss *Gilford*’s
“ narrative, nor will I pardon you,
“ unless you prevail on her to proceed.”

“ I FEAR, Sir, (said Mr. Gore) her
“ spirits are too much weakened by
“ the late shock they have sustained ;
“ but with Miss *Gilford*’s permission,
“ though it will be greatly to your dis-
“ advan-

“ advantage, I will satisfy you as far
“ as is in my power. This proposal
“ met a general approbation ; *Lavinia*
“ in particular seemed highly pleased.

“ It has already appeared but too
“ plain (said he) that *Sally* could not
“ withstand the united powers of love
“ and affluence ; it is certain she did
“ not by what followed ; for at the fixed
“ time Sir *William* called on me, and
“ we went to the place appointed,
“ where I thought I saw the best, the
“ most deserving of her sex changed
“ into a false, perfidious ingrate. I
“ heard the very words which *Sally* re-
“ peated to her Lady ; I saw the wretch
“ lean forward to her accomplice ; and
“ my transports of rage were so un-
“ governable, that I would have fal-
“ len instantly on my supposed rival, if
“ his vile employer, whom I now regard-
“ ed

“ed as my best friend, had not with-
“held me.

“WHAT can I say in defence of
“my stupidity? Only that I was blind-
“ed by infatuation, and that the glim-
“mering light from a moon in its de-
“cline helped to deceive me.

“AFTER supposing myself con-
“vinced of your perfidy, I was impa-
“tient to leave the hated spot: Let us
“(said I) let us go from this false, this
“fickle woman, whom I now despise.”

“SIR *William* said every thing he
“could devise to heighten my jealousy,
“if that had been possible.

“WE returned together to Mr.
“*Willace*, who was shocked at the al-
“teration a few hours had made in
“me.—

“ me.—He begged to know the cause.
“ I refused to satisfy him, still anxious
“ for the reputation of one I had once
“ so truly, so ardently loved ; whom
“ yet I could not avoid loving. I even
“ made Sir *William*, who had solemn-
“ ly assured me he would never ad-
“ dress Miss *Gilford*, as solemnly pro-
“ mise to keep her folly a secret.

“ UNABLE to stay at *Weatly*, where
“ I was every day subject to see my
“ still dear, and as I thought false, *La-*
“ *vinia*, I took my leave of Mr. *Wil-*
“ *lace*, first sending a note not to up-
“ braid Miss *Gilford*, but to let her
“ know I was no stranger to her infi-
“ delity.

“ ON my going from *Weatly*, I had
“ some thoughts of proceeding to *Lon-*
“ *don* ; but changed them in favour of
“ my

“ my own house, about three miles
 “ from this place, which I preferred
 “ for the satisfaction of seeing and re-
 “ ceiving advice and consolation from
 “ the best of men.

“ NOTWITHSTANDING my uncle
 “ did and said every thing to make me
 “ conquer a passion which appeared to
 “ be so ill placed, yet he found it a task
 “ not to be accomplished : your idea
 “ followed me every where.

“ IT is impossible to say what I felt
 “ when my uncle this morning related
 “ to me his interview with you the
 “ preceding evening ; but how were
 “ my transports increased upon being
 “ told I should see you in a few hours !
 “ My revered director thought I had
 “ best conceal myself, where I could
 “ hear the remainder of your story. I

“ mitted ; you came ; I saw you enter,
 “ and felt emotions such as cannot be
 “ described.

“ OH ! I could for ever have listened
 “ to the music of your voice, had you
 “ not fixed my whole attention on the
 “ villainy of that detested wretch, who
 “ had poisoned my soul with suspi-
 “ cion. You shewed me what a fool,
 “ what a dupe, I had been. I could
 “ not suppress a sudden gust of passion.
 “ My abrupt appearance was the con-
 “ sequence, by which my dearest *Lavinia*
 “ and her charming friend were
 “ so greatly terrified. And now, ma-
 “ dam (taking the hand of his amiable
 “ mistress, with eyes expressing the
 “ very soul of contrition), will you, can
 “ you forgive a crime unpremeditated ?
 “ Can you forget that I have contami-
 “ nated

“ nated the purity of your mind with
“ dark, injurious suspicions ?”

“ INDEED (said Miss *Gilford*, in the
“ sweetest voice imaginable) I ought
“ not to forgive you ; for had I not
“ stood on a very tottering basis, such
“ a wretch as Sir *William More* would
“ not so easily have pushed me from
“ your good opinion : yet his uncom-
“ mon arts must, I think, plead in
“ your favour.”

“ EXALTED goodness ! (replied Mr.
“ *Gore*) every hour of my life will be
“ too little——”

“ STOP, Sir (interrupting him) your
“ pardon is not yet passed my lips,
“ though I can assure you it has long
“ been made out in my heart. Com-
“ ply with one request, and——”

“ OH name it, my beloved Miss
“ *Gilford* (cried Mr. *Gore*), and hate
“ me if I deny it.”

“ PRAY, Sir, (said *Maria*) will you
“ pardon me if I presume to make
“ another.”

“ You do me honour, Madam,”
said he.

“ WELL, but first (continued Miss
“ *Coventry*) let *Lavinia* make her’s ;
“ and, as her friend, I shall afterwards
“ venture to deliver mine.”

“ I WILL then ; and remember, Sir,
“ you bade me hate you, if I find my
“ boon disregarded. Promise me that
“ you will never challenge the worst
“ of men, and that no behaviour of
“ his shall ever make you forget that
“ promise.”

“ WHAT

“WHAT hard conditions!” replied Mr. Gore.

“SUCH as you should accept with pleasure (interrupted his venerable uncle); and such as your heart ought to have suggested, had this Lady never mentioned them.”

“BUT what will the world say, should I let him go unpunished? You know, my dear Sir, I am passionate: how then can I rein in my just resentment?”

“I WILL put you in a way to command it (returned he), if you listen to my advice. In the place of resentment substitute pity: look on him as below the former, and only worthy of the latter, as he is a fellow-creature, stamped with the image of

“ his Divine Creator, though he has so
“ vilely debased it. Let this one con-
“ sideration instantly banish every
“ thought of revenge : for if his God,
“ whom he has much higher of-
“ fended, permits him to live, perhaps
“ to repent, shall you try to shorten
“ those days his goodness has allowed
“ him ? Reflect a moment : in that
“ moment suppose this miserable crea-
“ ture, at the last day, upbraiding you
“ for those torments denounced against
“ him : But for you, he will then say,
“ I might now have been happy ; you
“ cut me off when my sins were at
“ the highest.”

“ I OWN all you say, Sir (replied
“ Mr. *Gore*) to be extremely just ; but
“ should such a man, for such a crime,
“ go unpunished, what next may he
“ not attempt ? Shall none revenge
“ the

“ the wrongs of those he renders miserable ?”

“ YES (returned the sage), there is
“ one, and only one, who has a right
“ to do it.”

“ HAS any person a greater (said
“ Mr. Gore, colouring) than myself ?
“ Prove but this, and I swear from
“ that instant his life shall be safe as
“ the dearest of my friends.”

“ AGREED (cried the elder Mr.
“ Gore). Those ladies (addressing Lavinia and Maria) shall be our umpires. How, young gentleman, apply you those words, *Vengeance is mine, says the Lord, and I will repay it.*”

“ I WILL not (said his nephew,
“ with the most ineffable grace) ask
“ to hear the decision of our fair
“ judges, but confess myself con-
“ vinced, and that I should have done
“ a very unwarrantable action. Here
“ then I sincerely promise my dear
“ *Lavinia*, and you, Sir, never to pur-
“ sue Sir *William* with a thought of
“ revenge.”

MISS *Gilford* both by words and looks expressed the joy this declaration gave her ; every feature appeared newly animated ; the rose, which had been for some months faded, seemed at this instant to receive a second birth ; it sprang up spontaneous ; the beauteous glow and infant sweetness of the bud spoke in her blushing cheek.

MR.

MR. *Gore*'s pleasure is only to be supposed by those in a similar situation; his uncle's was not less exquisite, tho' more serene and tranquil; whilst Miss *Coventry*'s was little inferior to either, seeing the friend she loved so unexpectedly restored to the man her heart approved.

LAVINIA's curiosity was lulled asleep by the presence of her lover; but it was not the same with *Maria*, who now reminded Mr. *Gore*, he had not yet granted her request, nor permitted her to make it.

HE asked her pardon, and said she need only mention her commands to have them instantly obeyed.

"I DARE not command (replied she,
"with an air of the utmost sprightli-
I 5 "ness);

"ness) ; I am the humblest suppliant
 "in the world, and sue for your inter-
 "rest with this most revered of men,
 "that he will condescend to tell us
 "why he flies from society ? why he
 "buries himself in this subterraneous
 "dwelling ?"

"My dearest child (replied the
 "elder Mr. Gore), you shall not need
 "my nephew's intercession ; I am
 "ready to satisfy your curiosity, after I
 "have led you through my little ha-
 "bitation."

LAVINIA's lover having desired the
 honour of her hand, "Come, my
 "good young lady (continued he), will
 "you accept the hand of an old
 "man ?" to *Maria*.

"GLADLY,

“GLADLY, Sir (she replied) ; and
“with the same confidence I would
“my father’s. Indeed, your senti-
“ments are so like my dear parent’s,
“that I cannot help looking on you
“with reverential duty.”

“HARRY (said he, applying to his
“nephew), could you have thought
“vanity would have found its way to
“this humble rock ? But I now find
“walls of flint will not exclude it.
“Look round, my charming guests :
“what see you here to make me vain ?
“yet I feel I really am so ; nay, per-
“haps more, and with greater cause,
“than a monarch on his throne. Has
“not this deserving young creature
“(said he) regarded me with duty ? But
“say, my sweet child, will you per-
“mit me to love you with a father’s
“fondness ?”

“WILL I (repeated the delighted
“*Maria*) ! O Heavens, how you op-
“press me with goodness ! My dear,
“dear Sir, from this hour look on me
“with a paternal eye. How happy
“in two such parents !”

“CHARMING excellence (wiping
“away the tears that fell on his fur-
“rowed cheek) ! Yes, you are, you
“shall be my adopted daughter. Yet,
“alas ! I have no inheritance to be-
“queath you : all my possessions are
“sorrows.”

“AH, my dear father, deny me not
“a child’s part ; give me a portion out
“of those sorrows. This I entreat the
“more, as I have really none of my
“own.”

“GRACIOUS

“ GRACIOUS Heaven (replied the
“ Sage) has at last looked on me with
“ a pitying eye : it sends me another
“ child : again I am a father. And
“ you will sometimes, my dearest *Ma-*
“ *ria*, visit me ? Your natural parent
“ would not deny me to share with him
“ this comfort, did he know how I
“ have been deprived of every other.”

Miss *Coventry* replied, there should
pass but few days in which she would
not visit him, and petition his blessing.



C H A P. XIV.

HERE they were joined by *Lavinia* and Mr. *Gore*. The latter, seeing Miss *Coventry* and his uncle engaged in conversation, had gently drawn the object of his wishes to the farther end of the cell, and there whispered a thousand vows of constancy, far from displeasing to his fair mistress, if her countenance corresponded with her heart.

THEY now quitted the first apartment, by a door which the ladies had not before perceived, each of their conductors a candle in his hand ; a caution absolutely necessary, as this
cavity

cavity had no light like the outer room, to which it was conveyed by a sky-light so curiously contrived, as not to be visible on the outside.

AFTER proceeding about forty yards, they could plainly distinguish the sound of waters ; and expressing their surprise, the elder Mr. Gore told them they were within twenty yards of a river ; “ the most beautiful, perhaps, “ (added he) in *Europe* : nay, I question if my daughter and Miss *Gilford* will not, at first, imagine they “ are by some magic conveyed to *Mexico* or *Peru*.—But (continued he) let “ me beg my dear children will indulge an old man’s request, and “ suffer me to lead them a few steps “ with their eyes blinded.”

THEY

THEY consented to this proposal, and in less than a minute were told they might look about them.

Who can describe their astonishment to see the roof, which was in the shape of a dome, hung with ten thousand sparkling gems: diamonds, emeralds, and rubies, appeared above, below, on every side.—What still added to the amazing beauty of this place, was a transparent river, that ran on one side, whose clearness resembled chrystal.

LAVINIA and *Maria* having expressed their surprise and pleasure, began to examine more minutely those dazzling gems which met their sight.—

“ Was ever any thing so charming
 (“ said *Miss Coventry*) as that emerald

“ crescent ?

“crescent? It makes me wish to be a
“follower of *Diana*, to have it placed
“upon my forehead.”

“INDEED, it is very charming (re-
“plied Miss *Gilford*); yet I confess
“that diamond which represents a
“heart pleases me infinitely more. But
“pray, gentlemen, (said they both)
“say by what *ignis fatuus* these things
“appear to us as they do?”

“You call this deception by a
“proper name (replied their venerable
“guide): it is an *ignis fatuus* that
“deceives you; a false light dazzles
“the optics of your sight.”

SAYING this he extinguished the
candles, and opening a small door,
the sun, which had been for two hours
excluded, again saluted them; but
scarce

scarce could its enlivening rays make amends for the beautiful prospect that vanished at its approach :—the diamonds, rubies, and emeralds were now metamorphosed into congealed drops, which by the nature of the cavern petrified ere they could descend : the crescent and heart were still visible, tho' no longer desirable ornaments.

THE Ladies had not time given them to make many reflections on this sudden and surprising change ; new beauties waited their attention : the prospect, indeed, was not extensive, yet every thing that could charm the sight, or please the imagination, seemed collected into this one little spot.

WHAT delighted them in a particular manner was the river, which
had

had its rise in the cavern, continued through a small but beautiful plain, where Nature had been lavish of her choicest gifts. To congratulate it on leaving its dark prison, flowers and shrubs were here planted by her hand in such abundance, that it might not improperly have been termed a wilderness of sweets. Through these it playfully wandered till a morose wood, envious of the happiness of its situation, allured it to its gloomy abode, where being once arrived, it was soon obscured from the sight.

THEIR sage Conductor having fastened the door through which they entered the plain, proceeded to a small house, which the Ladies had not perceived, being planted thick on each side with trees. As they came near, they were met by a man of about fifty,
who

who was so struck with seeing *Lavinia* and Miss *Coventry*, that for some time he could not utter a syllable.

“HONEST *Simon*, (said Mr. *Gore*)
“we are come upon you a little abruptly ; but no matter : let us see
“what the house affords. Come, is
“*Betty* within ?”

“No, and please your Honour,”
he replied, somewhat recovered from his surprise by the manner in which his old master accosted him ; “*Betty* is
“gone to the *Wink* to fill the tea-kettle ; tho’ it wants more than an hour
“of your Honour’s usual time.”

“It does so (said the good Hermit) ; but we are willing to shew
“these Ladies we are not so very savage as our first appearance bespoke
“us.”

THIS

THIS hint was enough for *Simon*, who, after making half a score bows to their ladyships, conducted them into a parlour : but without that appellation it might have been mistaken for a bower of jessamines and woodbines, the walls being entirely covered with their luxuriant branches, which being now in full bloom, exhaled a fragrance hardly to be rivalled in either *India*.

MR. *Harry Gore* took a hand of each fair damsel, and seated them in a window which overlooked a parterre of flowers ending in a green slope, which served as a velvet margin to that river I have just described.

“ WHAT a paradise, Mr. *Gore*
 “ (said both Ladies), have you brought
 “ us to ! Was ever any thing so hea-
 “ venly ! Ah (continued Miss. *Gil-*
 “ *ford*

“*ford* with inimitable sweetness) ! one
“ would think this day was deter-
“ mined to make me remember it
“ with pleasure to the end of my
“ life.”

THE entrance of his uncle did not prevent this transported lover from pressing to his faithful heart the hand of his *Lavinia*.

Miss *Coventry*'s attention was now engaged by a pretty playful squirrel, fastened by a small chain to the window ; which the elder gentleman observing, immediately giving freedom to the little animal, presented it to his adopted daughter.

THIS present, though of no real value, yet as it came from the person she revered next to her father, she received

ceived with delighted acknowledgements.

BETTY now entered with tea, followed by *Simon* with fruit, wine, and cakes ; and as soon as the former was removed, the old gentleman did not wait to be reminded of giving them the particulars, which he doubted not had greatly raised their curiosity, and addressed them in the following words :

“ I KNOW not, my dear children,
 “ what right I have to give you uneasiness ; yet if you insist on the performance of my promise, I am now
 “ ready to fulfil it.”

“ BY no means would we request
 “ it (answered Miss *Gilford*) if the recital will renew your grief.”

“ THAT it cannot do (he rejoined) ; my unhappiness is but too fresh
 “ in

“ in my memory ; it is ever before
“ me ; it is interwoven with my very
“ existence ; nor can I for a moment
“ lose sight of my sorrows, till I am
“ called to that place from whence
“ they will be shut out. I distress
“ you, Ladies ! Wipe off those sym-
“ pathetick drops, or I cannot think of
“ proceeding.”

THE snowy cambrick, though not more dazzling white than their complexions, was now applied to their eyes, by the assistance of which the heavenly azure and sparkling jet were again restored to their native lustre ; and Mr. *Gore* entered upon his history, as will be found in the next volume.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

